


BOOKS Written by the Reverend
JOHN NORRIS, M. A.


1. **A** Collection of Miscellanies, consisting of Poems, Essays, Discourses and Letters.
2. Christian Blessedness: Or, Practical Discourses upon the Beatitudes of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
3. Reason and Religion: Or, the Grounds and Measures of Devotion, considered from the Nature of God and the Nature of Man.
4. Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life, with Reference to the Study of Learning and Knowledge. To which is annexed a Visitation Sermon.
5. The Theory and Regulation of Love. A Moral Essay in Two Parts. To which are added Letters Philosophical and Moral between the Author and Dr. Henry More.
6. Practical Discourses in Four Volumes, 8vo.
7. An Account of Reason and Faith in Relation to the Mysteries of Christianity.
8. A Practical Treatise concerning Humility.
9. A Treatise concerning Christian Prudence.
10. Spiritual Counsel, or the Father's Advice to his Children.
11. Of Religious Discourse in Common Conversation.
12. A Philosophical Discourse concerning the Natural Immortality of the Soul. In Two Parts.
13. A Letter to Mr. Dodwell concerning the Immortality of the Soul of Man. Being a further pursuance of the Philosophical Discourse.
14. An Essay towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World. In Two Parts.
15. Letters concerning the Love of God; between the Author of the Proposal to the Ladies and Mr. John Norris.

All Printed for *Edmund Parker* in *Lombard-Street*.

 Where the rest of that Author's Works are to be had.

BOOKS Written by the Reverend
JOHN NORRIS, M. A.

1. **A** Collection of Miscellanies, consisting of Poems, Essays, Discourses and Letters.
2. Christian Blessedness: Or, Practical Discourses upon the Beatitudes of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
3. Reason and Religion: Or, the Grounds and Measures of Devotion, considered from the Nature of God and the Nature of Man.
4. Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life, with Reference to the Study of Learning and Knowledge. To which is annexed a Visitation Sermon.
5. The Theory and Regulation of Love. A Moral Essay in Two Parts. To which are added Letters Philosophical and Moral between the Author and Dr. Henry More.
6. Practical Discourses in Four Volumes, 8vo.
7. An Account of Reason and Faith in Relation to the Mysteries of Christianity.
8. A Practical Treatise concerning Humility.
9. A Treatise concerning Christian Prudence.
10. Spiritual Counsel, or the Father's Advice to his Children.
11. Of Religious Discourse in Common Conversation.
12. A Philosophical Discourse concerning the Natural Immortality of the Soul. In Two Parts.
13. A Letter to Mr. Dodwell concerning the Immortality of the Soul of Man. Being a further pursuance of the Philosophical Discourse.
14. An Essay towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World. In Two Parts.
15. Letters concerning the Love of God; between the Author of the Proposal to the Ladies and Mr. John Norris.

All Printed for *Edmund Parker* in *Lombard-Street*.
 Where the rest of that Author's Works are to be had.

Reason and Religion:

OR, THE
Grounds and Measures
OF

DEVOTION,

Consider'd from the
NATURE of GOD,
AND THE
Nature of Man,

In several CONTEMPLATIONS.

*With Exercises of Devotion apply'd to every
Contemplation.*

By *JOHN NORRIS*, M. A.

The SEVENTH EDITION.



L O N D O N:

Printed for *Edmund Parker* at the *Bible and Crown*
in *Lombard-Street*. 1724.

Reason and Religion:

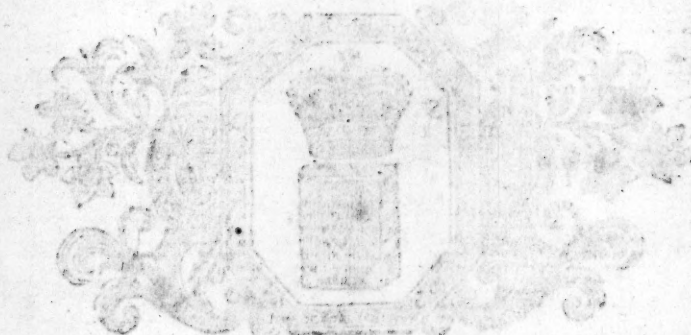
OR, THE
Grounds and Measures
OF

DEVOTION

IN A PRACTICE OF GOD,



BY JOHN NORRIS, M.A.
THE SECOND EDITION

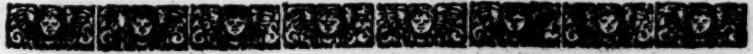


L O N D O N:
Printed for Richard Paine at the Bible and Crown
in Strand-street: 1724.



Reason and Religion:
OR, THE
Grounds and Measures
OF
DEVOTION,
Consider'd from the
NATURE of GOD,
AND THE
Nature of Man,
In several CONTEMPLATIONS.
*With Exercises of Devotion apply'd to
every Contemplation.*

THE SEVENTH EDITION.







TO THE READER.



HERE having been several Excellent Things of a *Devotional Nature* written for the Use and Benefit of *Ordinary and Unlearned Persons*, but little or nothing for the pious Entertainment of more *refined and elevated Understandings*, I thought I could not employ my Pen to better Purpose than in writing something of the like Kind for the Use of the *Learned Reader*, who, perhaps, needs as much to be assisted in his *Devotion* as the more *Ignorant*; and whose *Heart* may want as much to be *Inflamed*, as the others *Head* does to be *Instructed*.

It must be acknowledged therefore that I now write only to those of the *Learned Order*, and not to all of them; neither, but only to those who are not spoil'd by their *Learning*, and whose *Understandings* are not *cramp'd* by the cleaving *Prejudices* of *Scholastick Education*.

To the Reader.

To those who have a Genius for the *Contemplative Way*, who have *Patience* enough to pursue a long Train of Thoughts, *Acuteness* enough to discern their Order and Dependence, and (which is worth all) *Indifferency* enough to use and allow *Liberty of Thinking*, and not to startle, and be affrighten'd at a *New Notion*.

By these few Hints the Reader may easily perceive both *what kind of Compositions* these are, and how I would have him come *prepared and qualified* to the Reading of them. What further concerns him to know, in reference to the Subject and Design of the Book, he may learn from the *Introduction*.

23 OCT 62



The

The General
CONTENTS
 Of the W H O L E.

P A R T I.



I N T R O D U C T I O N.

Contemplation I.
Of the General Idea of God.

Contemplation II.
*That God is a Being absolutely Perfect, proved
 from the preceding General Idea of God.*

Contemplation III.
*That therefore all the Perfections of particular
 Beings exist in God, and that after a more
 excellent manner than they do in particular
 Beings themselves.*

Contemplation IV.
*Of the Attributes of God in general ; parti-
 cularly of the Unity of God ; which is proved
 from his Idea.*

THE CONTENTS.


Contemplation V.
Of the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God.


Contemplation VI.
Of the Omnipotence of God.

Contemplation VII.
Of the Divine Justice and Veracity.

Contemplation VIII.
Of the Divine Goodness and Philanthropy.

PART II.

Contemplation I.
 *F Man consider'd as a Creature.*

Contemplation II.
 *O Man consider'd as an Intelligent Creature.*

Contemplation III.
Of Man consider'd as an Amorous Creature.

Contemplation IV.
Man consider'd as an Irregular Lover.



THE



T H E INTRODUCTION.

I.



HERE being nothing of greater Consequence, to the highest Interest of Man, than the Knowledge of *God* and himself, I thought I could no better employ my Solitude, either for my *Own* or for the *World's* Advantage, than in exercising my severest Contemplations upon these two great and important Subjects, the *Nature* of *God*, and the *Nature* of *Man*.

II.

It must indeed be confess'd, that there is nothing whereof we have or can have so little Knowledge, as of these two things; and 'tis much to be lamented, that *there* should lie our greatest *Ignorance*, where we are most concern'd to *know*. But thus it is: *That* of our selves, which we are best acquainted with, is least of all our selves: And the *unknown* Part of this little World is much greater than the *known*. We know but little of our *Bodies*, but infinitely less of our *Souls*. God has not given us any *Idea* of the *latter*, and whatever we can borrow from our *Senses* will never be able to supply that Defect. For there is a greater Distance and

Disproportion between an *Immaterial Substance* and a *Sensible*, than between one sensible and another. But now the understanding the Nature of one sensible will not suffice to make us understand the Nature of another. For a Man born blind will never from his understanding of *Sounds* come to understand *Colours*. Much less therefore will our understanding of *Sensible* things help us to understand the Nature of *Immaterial Substances*.

III.

And if not of *Immaterial Substances* in *general*, much less will it serve us to understand the *Essence* of the *great God*, which infinitely transcends all other *Immaterial Substances*. The *Idea* of *God* is least capable of all *spiritual Beings*, to be form'd out of *sensible Phantasms*. For I consider, that by how much the more our *Mind* is rais'd to the *Contemplation* of *Spiritual* things, by so much the more we always *abstract* from *Sensibles*. But now the *highest* and *last* *Term* of *Contemplation* is, the *Divine Essence*. Whence it follows necessarily, that the *Mind* which sees the *Divine Essence*, must be *totally* and *thoroughly* absolv'd from all *Commerce* with the *Corporeal Senses*, either by *Death*, or some *extatical* and *rapturous Abstraction*. So true is that which *God* said to *Moses*, *T'hou canst not see my Face, for there shall no Man see me, and live*, *Exod. xxxiii. 20.*

IV.

So far therefore are we from deriving any *Idea* of *God* from our *Senses*, that they are our greatest *Impediment* in *Divine Contemplations*. So great, that we cannot any other way *clearly* apprehend the *Essence* of *God* while we are lodg'd in

in the Prison of our Senses. God cannot give us a distinct View of himself, while we hold any Commerce with our Senses. For he that knows exactly what proportion our present Condition bears to his own Divine Glories, has told us, That no Man shall *see him*, and *live*. We must therefore for ever despair of conceiving the Divine Essence *clearly* and *distinctly*, not only from our Senses, but even *with them*.

V.

Not that there is any Darkness or Obscurity in God. No, God is the most knowable Object in himself. For he is the *First Being*, and therefore the *First Truth*, and therefore the *First Intelligible*, and consequently the *most Intelligible*. One Apostle says, that he *dwells in light*; and another, that *Tim. vi. 16.* he is *light*, and that there is no *John i. 9.* Darkness at all in him. God therefore consider'd in his own Nature is as well the most *Intelligible*, as the most *Intelligent Being* in the World.

VI.

The Difficulty therefore arises not from the *Obscurity* of the *Object*, but from the *Disproportion* of the *Faculty*. For our Understandings stand affected to the *most manifest* Objects, as the Eye of a Bat to the Light of the Sun, as the Philosopher observes in his *Metaphysicks*. God dwells in Light, as the Apostle says, but then 'tis such as no Man can approach unto; *ὅς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπρόσιτος*, he inhabits *unapproachable Light*, or a Light which cannot be come at, not for its *distance* (for *Tim. vi. 16.* he is not far from every one of us) but for its *Brightness*. The very Angels are forc'd

forc'd to *veil their Faces* when they see it; but for Mortals, they cannot so much
Act.xvii.27. as come *nigh it*. The short is, God is *too intelligible* to be here clearly understood by an *embod'y'd* Understanding; and too great a Light hinders Vision, as much as Darkneſs.

VII.

But tho' we cannot here have a clear and diſtinct Knowledge either of *God* or *our Selves*; yet we may know ſo much of both as may ſerve the Ends of *Piety* and *Devotion*. We may by attending to that general Idea of God, which is by himſelf imprinted on our Minds, learn to unfold many of the Perfections of his Glorious and Inviſible Eſſence; and tho' we cannot ſee his *Face* and live, yet his *Back-Parts* (we know) were once ſeen by a Mortal Capacity, and ſo may be again. And for *our ſelves*, tho' God has not given us any *Idea* of our own Souls, yet the Powers and Operations, the Condition, Circumſtances, and Accidents of our Nature, are things that may fall within the Sphere of Human Conſideration. And from both theſe we may derive Meaſures for our due Behaviour towards the Great God. And this is the Deſign of the preſent Contemplations, *viz.* to conſider ſo much of the Nature of God, and the Nature of Man, as may afford ſufficient Grounds and Meaſures for true *Piety* and *Devotion*.

VIII.

By *Devotion* here I do not meerly underſtand that ſpecial Diſpoſition or *Act* of the Soul, whereby we warmly and paſſionately addreſs our ſelves to God in Prayer, (which is what is commonly meant by *Devotion*) but I uſe the
 Word

Word in a greater Latitude, so as to comprehend under it *Faith, Hope, Love, Fear, Trust, Humility, Submission, Honour, Reverence, Adoration, Thanksgiving*, in a word, all that Duty which we owe to God. Nor by this Acceptation do I stretch the Word beyond what either from its Rise it *may*, or by frequent Use among the Learned it *does* signifie. Devotion is a *devovendo*, from *devoting*, or giving up one's self wholly to the Service of another. And accordingly those among the *Heathens* who deliver'd and consign'd themselves up to Death, for the Safety of their Country, were called *Devoti*. And so in like manner for a Man to give up himself wholly and intirely to the Service of God, and actually to demean himself towards him in the Conduct of his Life, as becomes a Creature towards his Creator, is Devotion. And in this Latitude 22. *de Q.* the Word is used by *Aquinas*, who 82. *A. 1.* defines Devotion to be, *A Will readily to give up one's self to all those things which belong to the Service of God.*

IX.

This is what I here understand by Devotion, and of which I intend in the following Contemplations to assign the Grounds and Measures from the *Nature of God*, and the *Nature of Man*. But before I proceed to inforce and direct Devotion from these two particular Subjects of Contemplation, I think it not improper to consider a little by way of Preparation, how much Contemplation or Meditation in general contributes to the Advantage of Devotion.

X.

They that make *Ignorance* the *Mother* of *Devotion*, cannot suppose *Contemplation* any great Friend to it. For the more a Man contemplates, the more he will know, and the wiser he grows, the less apt upon their Supposition he will be for *Devotion*. But I would ask the Men of *this Fancy* this one Question. Is *Devotion* a Rational Thing, or is it not? If not, why then do they recommend *Ignorance*, or any thing else in order to it? For it may as well, nay, better, be let alone. But if it be a Rational Thing, then they must either say, that the more a Man considers, the less he will discover the Reasons of it; or that the more he discovers the Reasons of it, the less he will be persuaded to the Practice of it. Both which Propositions are absurd and ridiculous enough to be laugh'd at, but too ridiculous to be seriously refuted.

XI.

But to shew how much *Contemplation* serves to the Advantage of *Devotion*, we need only consider, that *Devotion* is an Act of the Will, that the Object of the Will is good apparent, or good understood, and consequently that every Act of the Will is influenc'd and regulated by *Consideration*. *Devotion* therefore is as much influenc'd by *Consideration*, as any other Act of the Will is: And therefore I cannot but admire at the Disposers of the Angelical Hierarchies, for making the *Seraphim* excel in *Love* and *Devotion*, and the *Cherubim* in *Knowledge*. As if *Knowledge* were not the best Preparative for *Devotion*.

XII.

I deny not but that *Knowledge* and *Devotion* often go asunder, and the *Wiseſt* are not always the *Devouteſt*. But then this is not owing to the natural and direct Influence of Knowledge, but comes to paſs only occaſionally and accidentally, by reaſon of ſome other Impediment: Suppose Pride, Luſt, Covetouſneſs, or ſome ſuch Indispoſition of Mind, which is of more Force and Prevalency to *lett* our Devotion, than Knowledge is to *further* it. And then no wonder that the heavier Scale weighs down. But ſtill Knowledge has a *natural* Aptneſs to excite Devotion, and will infallibly do it if not hinder'd by ſome other Cauſe. So that we may take this for a never-failing Rule, That all other things being equal, the more knowing and conſidering, ſtill the more devout. *Pſal. xxxix.* And in this Senſe alſo that of the *Pſalmiſt* will be verify'd, *While I was muſing the Fire kindled.*

The Great God ſo inlighten my Mind, and ſo govern my Pen, that by theſe my Meditations I may illuſtrate his ineffable Excellence, and kindle holy Flames of Devotion, both in my ſelf, and in my Reader. To him therefore I pray in the Words of Moſes, I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy Glory. Amen.



CONTEMPLATION I.

Of the General Idea of GOD.

I.



GOD never at any time discover'd so much of himself in so few Words, as when he said to *Moses*, enquiring by what *Name* he should stile him, to make him known to the Children of *Israel*, *Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you, אהיה אשר אהיה i. e. not as we render it in English, I am that I am, but, I am that am, or, I am he that am. And so the Seventy read it, 'Εγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ ὢν, I am he that is.*

II.

This is the Sacred and Incommunicable Name of the Great God, that which contains in it *πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος*, *all the Fulness of the Godhead*, all the Treasures of the Divinity. By this Name he is distinguish'd not only from false Gods, but from all other Beings whatsoever. *I am he that am*, says God, implying that he is after some very Eminent and Peculiar Manner, and that nothing else besides him *truly* is. This therefore denotes the great Eminence and Peculiarity both of the *Essence* and of the *Existence* of God. Here therefore I shall take my Ground, and shall hence deduce and unfold, *1st*, The general Idea or No-
tion.

Of the General Idea of God. 17

tion of God. 2^{dly}, Some of those chief Excellencies and Perfections of his which may have a more strong and immediate Influence upon our *Piety* and *Devotion*.

III.

In the present Contemplation I am concern'd for no more than only to fix the general Idea or Notion of God. This is of extraordinary Moment to the Clearness and Distinctness of our following Contemplations; for unless we take the right *Tbred* at first, the whole Progress will be nothing else but *Error* and *Confusion*.

IV.

Now as to the general Idea or first Conception of God, this has been Universally understood to be, that he is a *Being absolutely perfect*. This I say has been made the general Notion of God in all the *Metaphysicks* and *Divinity* that I have yet seen. And particularly it has been embraced by two Authors of extraordinary Speculation, *Cartesius* and *Dr. More*, whose Authority in this Matter claims a peculiar Deference, because they are Men that philosophize with a free and *unaddicted* Genius, and write not as they *read*, but as they *think*.

V.

This Opinion, because embraced by *many*, and some of them *great* Patrons, I once took for a Theorem of unquestionable Truth. But upon a more narrow Inspection, I find it necessary to dissent from it, tho' it be call'd *Singularity* to do so. For however plausible it may at first View appear, I think there is no less an *Objection* than plain *Demonstration* against it. Which I make out upon these Grounds.

VI.

VI.

First, I consider that the Idea of a Thing is that formal Conception or inward Word of the Mind, which expresses or represents the Essence or Nature of a Thing. Then again, by the Essence of a Thing, is meant that which *ought* to be first conceiv'd in a Thing, and to which all other Things are understood as super-added. I say, which *ought* to be first conceiv'd, because in fixing the Essence of a Thing, not the *Arbitrary* or *Accidental*, but the *Natural* Order of Conception is to be attended to. Whence it follows, that the Idea of a Thing is that which expresses that which is *first* of a Thing in *Order of Conception*.

VII.

This being granted, it does hence evidently follow, That that which is not first to be conceiv'd in the Nature of a Thing, but supposes somewhat there before it in Order of Conception, cannot be the Idea of that Thing, tho' it be never so necessarily and inseparably join'd with it. For if it were, then something would be the Idea of a Thing, which is not first in Order of Conception; which is against the Definition of such an Idea,

VIII.

For, to illustrate this by an Example, Who will say that the *Idea* of a *Triangle* consists in this, that any two of its Sides, taken together, are greater than the third remaining? This is, indeed, a necessary *Affection* of a Triangle, but it must by no means be allow'd to be its *Idea*, because 'tis not what we first conceive in it, that being this, *viz.* *That which is comprehended by three right Lines*: Which being the first Thing

Thing conceiv'd, is therefore the true Idea of a Triangle.

IX.

Now that to be a Being absolutely perfect, is not the *first conceivable* in God, but supposes something before it in the Divine Nature, is plain from hence, because it may be proved *a priori*, or by way of a *causal Dependence* from something in the same Divine Nature. That it may be thus proved I shall make appear in my second Contemplation, where I shall make it my profess'd Business actually to prove it. At present I *suppose* it, and upon that Supposition do, I think, rightly conclude, that *to be a Being absolutely perfect*, cannot be properly the Idea of God. For the *Consequence* of my Argument will, I suppose, be acknowledg'd by all, the only Difficulty is concerning the *Proposition* it self: But the Proof of this I reserve to the next Contemplation.

X.

If it be in the mean time objected, That to be a Being absolutely Perfect, is involv'd in the Notion of God; and that 'tis an Idea that can belong to no other Being, and that therefore it must be the Idea of God. To this I answer, 1. That a Thing may be involv'd in the Notion of a Thing either *Formally* and *Explicitly*, or else *Virtually* and *Implicitly*. Whatever is involv'd Formally and Explicitly in any Idea, is Essential to that Idea. But not what is involv'd only Virtually and Implicitly. Thus 'tis virtually and implicitly involv'd in the Idea of a Triangle, that it has three Angles equal to two right ones, and yet we don't therefore make this the Idea of a Triangle, because 'tis not there

there *Formally* and *Explicitly*, but only *Virtually* and *Potentially*. But now to be a Being absolutely Perfect, is not involv'd in the Notion of God Formally and Explicitly, but only Virtually and Potentially (as will appear in the next Contemplation) and consequently 'tis hence more rightly concluded, that the Idea of God does not consist in this, that he is a Being absolutely Perfect.

XI.

To the second Part of the Objection I answer, that 'tis not enough to make a Thing the Idea of a Thing, because it can belong to no other Being. For then to be *Circumscriptively in a Place* must be the Idea of a *Body*, and to be *Risible* must be the Idea of a *Man*, for these are supposed to belong to no other Beings. No, the most that ought to be concluded hence, is, that such Things are *new; i. e. strict Properties*, such as immediately and necessarily flow from the Essence of the Subject; not that they are the very Essence it self. When therefore 'tis said that to be a Being absolutely Perfect can belong to no other but God, all that may be hence concluded is, that 'tis an *Essential*, and consequently *Incommunicable Property* of God to be a Being absolutely Perfect, but not that therein the *Idea* of God does consist.

XII.

If then this be not the Idea of God, wherein shall we fix it? It must be in something which we *first* conceive in God, and which is the Basis and Foundation of whatever we ascribe to him, whatever we think or say of him. It must be in something that in some measure expresses and represents his Essence. And where shall

we look for this but in his *Name*, that great *Name* whereby he reveal'd himself to *Moses*, and whereby *Moses* was to make him known to his own *People*, who were then Ignorant of him? In this *Name* of God I suppose his Essence and Idea to be couch'd.

XIII.

Here therefore I find my self engaged in these two Considerations. First, Why the Idea of God should be lodg'd in his *Name*. Secondly, What this Idea of God is, which is there lodg'd. That the Idea of God is lodg'd in his *Name*, I am induced to believe upon these grounds. First, Because I think it highly reasonable to suppose in general, That whenever God gives a *Name* to any thing, 'tis such as expresses its *Nature*. Not that words signifie *naturally*, but that God makes choice of such a word whose signification naturally expresses the thing, tho' 'twas thro' *Arbitrary* Institution that it *first* came by such a signification. In this sense, I say, 'tis highly reasonable to believe, that God always names things according to their *Natures*. For is it consistent with the Accuracy of Infinite Wisdom to *mis-call* any thing? No, as he knows the *number* of things, so he is as well skill'd in the *Natures*. And therefore, says the *Psalmist*, He *Psal.* 147. *telleth the number of the Stars, and calleth them all by their Names*. That is, by such significant Names as express their several *Powers* and *Influences*.

XIV.

Secondly, I consider, That as 'tis highly decorous and reasonable in general, that God should call things by such Names as express their

their Natures ; so there is *here* a particular reason why he should express his *own* Essence in this his Name. For thus stood the Case : The Children of *Israel* had been now a long while conversant among the *Egyptians*, who were the greatest *Idolaters* and *Polytheists* in the World, there they had been used to variety of Gods, who were also call'd by variety of Names. Hereupon, says *Moses* to God, *Behold, when I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your Fathers hath sent me unto you ; and they shall say to me, What is his Name ? What shall I say unto them ?* Implying that it was necessary (as indeed it was) that God should notifie himself by such a Name, as would distinguish him from all the Gods of the *Heathen*, that is, by a *Proper* and *Essential* Name. Whereupon, says God to *Moses*, *I am that am. Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.*

XV.

It being therefore concluded, that the Idea of God must be lodg'd in this his Name ; let us now consider what this Idea of God is which is there lodg'd. And for this we must attend in the first place to the true sense and signification of this Name of God, *I am that am*, or, *I am*. Now this can signifie no other, but *Being it self*, or, *Universal Being*, or *Being in General*, *Being in the Abstract*, without any restriction or limitation. As if God had said, You enquire who I am, and by what Name I would be distinguish'd. Know then, that, *I am he that am, I am Being it self*. This therefore must express the *Essence*, and consequently this

Of the General Idea of God. 23

this must be the *Formal Conception* and *Idea* of God.

XVI.

But this must be further *explain'd*, before it be further *confirm'd*. In order to which, I consider, that as, in every particular order or kind of Being there is a Universal Nature, under which all singulars are comprehended, and whereof they all partake: As for Instance, there is the Nature or Essence of a Circle or Triangle in common, as well as this or that particular Circle or Triangle. So in Beings consider'd as Beings, there is Being in general, Universal Being, Being it self, or the Essence of Being, as well as this or that Being in particular.

XVII.

Again I consider, that all other Universal or Abstract Essences are really distinct from, and exist out of those singulars whose Essences they are. This must of necessity be allow'd, whatever the *Peripateticks* remonstrate to the contrary. Things must exist in *Idea* before they do in *Nature*, otherwise 'twill be impossible to give an intelligible account of the *stability* of *Science*, and of Propositions of *Eternal Truth*. But this I have already demonstrated in my **Metaphysical Essay*, and shall have an occasion further to discourse of it when I come to treat of the *Omni*science of God.

**Vid. Col-
lection of
Miscellanies.*

Here therefore supposing it, I say, That as all other Universals or Abstract Essences are really distinct from, and exist out of those Singulars whose Essences they are; so in like manner there is Being it self, or the Essence of Being, really distinct, and separately existing from all particular Beings.

XVIII.

XVIII.

And now that the Essence and Idea of God does consist in this *Being it self*, or this *Essence of Being*, will be further confirm'd from this Consideration, that as all other Universal Natures or Essences are nothing else *Met. Essay.* (as I have already elsewhere, and shall hereafter again prove) but the Intellect of God, which as variously imitable, or participable, exhibits all the general Orders and Natures of things; so this *Being it self*, or this *Essence of Being*, what can it be else, but the very *Essence of God*, containing in it the whole Plenitude and Possibility of being, all that is, or can be?

XIX.

And that this is the true Idea and Essence of God, to be *Being it self*, is further plain, because 'tis the first conceivable in God. For the proof of this, That it is the first conceivable in God, I might appeal to experience. For, let any Contemplative Person try whether this be not the first thing he conceives when he hears the Name of God. But I demonstrate it thus, The first thing which is conceivable in God, must be the first thing that can absolutely be conceiv'd. But being it self is the first Thing that can absolutely be conceiv'd. Therefore *Being it self* is the first Thing which is conceivable in God.

XX.

The Assumption I suppose, will pass unquestion'd with all. For what can we possibly conceive before *Being it self*? The Proposition I prove thus, God is the *first*; or, there is nothing before God. And therefore the first thing

Of the General Idea of God. 25

Thing which is Conceivable in God, must be the first Thing that can *absolutely* be conceiv'd. Otherwise there would be something before God, which is against the Supposition. The Conclusion therefore follows, That Being it self is the first Thing which is conceivable in God; and consequently, that the true Idea of God, is Being it self; which was the thing to be proved.

The Use of this to Devotion.

IF then God be *Being it self*, there is Infinite Reason why we should Love, Fear, Reverence and Adore him. For what an *enlarged, indeterminate, transcendental, universaliz'd* thing is Being it self! There is a vast Amplitude in the Degrees of *particular* Beings, and inconceivable almost is the Disproportion between an Intelligence of the highest Order, and a piece of *dead impoverish'd* Matter. But what is this to the disproportion between the highest *particular* Being, nay all the particular Beings that are or can be, and *Being it self*? This is that which *truly is*, all other Things are but *shadows and phantasms*. Being it self is its own Basis and Foundation, the *great contrariety to nothing*, the steady and inmost support and establishment of all things that *have Being*, and the fountain of all that *can be*. 'Tis an Ocean without a Shore, a Depth without a Bottom. In short, 'tis such an *immense Amplitude* as a Man cannot duly think of without the profoundest impressions of awe and reverence, humility, and self-annihilation, love and wonder, fear and great joy.

The Aspiration.

O Thou whose Name is *Jehovah*, who art the very Essence of Being, who art Being it self, how can I ever sufficiently love, fear, reverence and Adore thee! Thou art above all the Affections of my *Heart*, all the motions of my *Will*, yea and all the conceptions of my *Understanding*; No sooner do I begin to think of thee, but I am plunged beyond my depth; my Thoughts are all swallow'd up and overwhelm'd in their first Approach to thy Essence, and I shall sooner lose my self than find thee.

O *dreadful Excellence*, I tremble to think of thy Essence; my Soul turns her self from thee, She cannot look forward, She pants, She burns, She languishes, is beaten back with the light of thy Glories, and returns to the *familiarity* of her own *Darkness*, not because She *chuses* it, but because She is *Weary*.

O *Sovereign Greatness*, how am I *impoverish'd*, how am I *contracted*, how am I *annihilated* in thy Presence! Thou only art, I am not, Thou art all, I am nothing. But 'tis well, O my God, that I am nothing, so thou art all; 'tis well I am not in my self, so I am in thee.

O *Being it self*, 'tis in thee that I *live, move, and have my being*. Out of thee I *am* nothing, I *have* nothing, I can *do* nothing. I am but little and inconsiderable *with* thee, and what then should I be *without* thee? To thee therefore I devote and dedicate my whole self, for I am wholly thine. I will ever live to thee, since

God is a Being absolutely Perfect. 27

I must ever live *in* thee. And oh let my Beloved be ever *Mine*, as I *am*, and ever *will* be *His*. Amen.



CONTEMPLATION II.

That God is a Being absolutely Perfect, proved from the Preceding general Idea of God.

I.

FROM the Essences of things flow all their Attributes and Perfections. Having therefore in the preceding Contemplation fix'd the Essence and Idea of God in Being it self, I shall now in the first place hence deduce that he is a *Being* absolutely perfect. This has been hitherto taken for the very formal conception and Idea of God, and accordingly has been made the ultimate ground and foundation to prove all his other Perfections, but has rather been *supposed* than *proved* it self. But now I make this the *first general Attribute* of God, to be a Being absolutely Perfect. The proof and deduction of which, from his Idea, is the concern of the present Contemplation.

II.

Let us therefore reassume the Idea of God, which if we attend to, we shall discern that absolute Perfection is virtually involv'd in it, and consequently that God is a Being absolutely perfect. The Idea of God, as we have shewn, is Being it self. Now I consider in the first place that Being it self contains in it *all the degrees* of Being; and consequently *all possible*

28 Part I. Contemplation II.

Perfection. The Argument in form runs thus :
Whatever has all the degrees of Being, has all
Perfection.

But Being it self has all the degrees of Being.
Therefore Being it self has all Perfection.

III.

The proof of the first Proposition will depend
upon this, that *Perfection* is nothing else but *de-
gree of Being*. If this be once made out, then
it plainly follows that whatever has all the
degrees of Being has all Perfection. Now to
prove that Perfection is nothing else but degree
of Being, I consider first that all Perfection
is by *Addition*. For the more perfect any
thing is, the more it has. But now all Addition
is by the Accession of something that *really is*.
For *nothing*, tho' never so often repeated, will
add nothing. And therefore Perfection is no-
thing else but a further degree of Being.

IV.

This I confirm by considering further that
every thing is perfect just so far as it *is*, and
according to the mode of Being, so is the
mode of Perfection. Thus Vertue is no other-
wise the perfection of a Man than as he *is*
vertuous, nor strength than he *is* strong. And
so in all other instances according as any thing
is, so is its Perfection. And so on the con-
trary, all imperfection is want of being, and
every thing is just so far imperfect as it *is not*,
some way or other. Now if every thing be so
far perfect or imperfect respectively as it either
is, or *is not*, then it clearly follows that per-
fection it self is nothing else but degree of
Being.

V. Again

V.

Again I consider, that 'tis impossible that perfection should be any thing else but degree of being. For there is nothing in the World but *Being*. If therefore one thing be more perfect than another, it must be, it can be for no other Reason but because it has more degrees of Being, there not being any thing else whereby it may exceed. For I think the case is here as in *Numbers*. One number exceeds another not by any virtue or quality of another kind, but only by the *multiplication* of the *same units*. And so one Being exceeds, or is more perfect than another, not by any thing which is not *Being*, but *only* by having more *units* or *degrees* of *Being*. Bare, meer Being is as 'twere an *unit*, the lowest perfection; and the only way to make it more perfect is *multiplication*, by adding to it more of the same units. And consequently perfection is nothing else but degree of Being.

VI.

This Proposition being sufficiently clear'd, that Perfection is nothing else but a Degree of Being, and consequently the other, that whatever has all the degrees of being has all Perfection; let us now consider whether Being it self has all the Degrees of Being. That it has so, will thus appear: Being it self is *indeterminate* in Being, and consequently has all the degrees of Being. The Argument reduced to Form is this: Whatever is indeterminate in being has all the Degrees of Being.

But Being it self is Indeterminate in being: Therefore Being it self has all the degrees of Being.

VII.

And first, that whatever is Indeterminate in Being has all the degrees of Being is certain, for the whole Power and Plenitude of Being can be but Indeterminate or infinite, there is nothing beyond that, and therefore that which is Indeterminate in Being, is adequate to the whole Power and Plenitude of Being; and consequently has all the Degrees of Being.

VIII.

And now that Being it self is Indeterminate in being is as certain. For what should bound it? Nothing can be bounded but by something that is *before* it; Which I thus demonstrate. To bound or limit a thing is to give it such a definite Portion of Being and no more. Now to give such a definite portion of Being and no more, implies giving of Being *Simply*, and that is the same as to be a *Cause*, and every Cause is before the Effect, and consequently nothing can be bounded but by something that is before it. But now what is before Being it self? Being it self is the first thing that can be conceiv'd: And therefore as that which is First in any kind, cannot be bounded by any thing in *that* kind, so Being it self, which is *Absolutely First*, cannot be bounded by any thing at all, because 'tis before all things. Indeed this or that particular Being may well be bounded, because it partakes so much and no more of Being it self, or the Essence of Being. But Being it self having nothing before it from whence it might receive limits, must of necessity be unlimited in being, and consequently have all the Degrees of Being.

IX.

And that Being it self has all the Degrees of Being, I further deduce from this Consideration; All Absolute and Universal Natures or Essences, have all the Perfection of their respective Orders and Kinds. And it cannot be otherwise, since they are *abstracted* from particular Subjects, whose deficiency in *receiving* is the ground of all that defect and imperfection which is in all *Concrete* Entities. Thus this or that particular Musical Composition, or this or that particular Vertuous Man, are of a limited excellence, because they partake of Harmony and Vertue to such a certain Measure. But now suppose Harmony it self, or Vertue it self, should exist Separately in the very *Essence*, they would necessarily have all the possible degrees of *Harmony* and *Vertue*. And accordingly 'tis as reasonable to conclude that Being it self has all the degrees of Being. Whence it follows, that Being it self has all Perfection, and consequently that God, who is Being it self, is Absolutely perfect.

X.

Now if to this it be Objected, That those things which *only are*, are the most imperfect, and that therefore Being it self is most imperfect; and that therefore if God be Being it self, he will be so far from being Absolutely Perfect, that he will be the most imperfect Being of any. I answer, That if those things which only are, were therefore imperfect because of the imperfection of *Being Absolutely*, as the Objection supposes, the Consequence would then be as is objected. But they are therefore only imperfect, because they partake of Absolute Being,

B-4

according

according to its most imperfect degree, which is *only* to exist. They are not therefore imperfect as they *are*, but as they *are not*. As they *are* they are *Perfect*, for to *be* is to be so far Perfect, and to be *Absolutely* is to be Absolutely Perfect. God therefore who Absolutely *is*, is Absolutely Perfect.

XI.

The same Conclusion I further demonstrate by this Order or Reasoning: That must needs be Absolutely Perfect which has no Imperfection: All imperfection is want of being, and therefore that must needs have no imperfection which is utterly removed from not being, and that must needs be utterly removed from not being which has all Being, and that must needs have all Being, which is Being it self; and therefore that which is Being it self must needs be absolutely Perfect; God therefore who is Being it self, is also an absolutely Perfect Being. Which was the Proposition to be proved.

The Use of this to Devotion.

IF then Perfection be only degree of Being, and if God be Infinite in Being, because Being it self, and consequently has all the degrees of Being, and consequently all Perfections, it will hence follow, that we own and acknowledge this absolute Perfection of his by a suitable exercise of all our Powers and Faculties. For this is but strict Justice. And that therefore we contemplate his Superlative Excellence with the deepest Awe, Reverence, and Admiration; that we love and desire him with the full bent and spring of our Souls; that we
fix

God is a Being absolutely Perfect. 33

fix and concenter upon him all our Passions and Affections ; that we make him our end and center, the center of our desires, and the end of our actions ; that we despise our selves and the whole Creation in comparifon of him : and that lastly we fo study to please this absolutely Perfect Being, that we may at last be admitted to the glorious Communications of his Infinite Perfections.

The Aspiration.

M*Y Lord and my God*, with what awful apprehensions do I *contemplate* thy Perfections ! How am I struck, dazled, and confounded with the light of thy Glories ! Thy Being standeth like the strong *Mountains*, and thy Perfections are like the great *Deep*. How can I think of thee without wonder and astonishment, and how can I think of any thing else but thee !

O thou Circle of Excellency, thou endless Orb of Perfection, where shall I begin to love thee ? Thou art *altogether Lovely* ; oh that I were also altogether *Love* ! My God, I desire nothing but to love thee, and to be loved by thee. *Thou art all Fair, my Love, there is no spot in thee.* My beloved is *Light*, and in him is no *Darkness* at all ; *Let him therefore kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine.*

My great God, how do I despise my self and the whole Creation when I once think upon thee ! *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire in comparifon of thee.* Thou alone dost so fill my

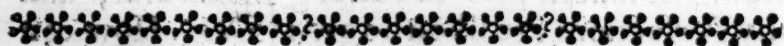
B. 5

Thoughts,

34 Part I. Contemplation III.

Thoughts, so ravish my Affections, that I can *contemplate* nothing but thee, I can *admire* nothing but thee, and I can *love* nothing but thee. Nor do I think my Soul straitned in being confined to thee, for thou, O my God, art *All*.

O my God, *I have lookt for thee in holiness, that I might behold this thy power and thy glory.* Psal. 63. I can now see it but in a *Glass darkly*, but thou hast told us that those who are *pure in heart* shall hereafter see thee *face to face*. Grant therefore I may so *love, fear and serve* thee here, that I may behold thee, and enjoy thee, *as thou art in thy Infinite Self*, for ever hereafter. *Amen.*



CONTEMPLATION III.

That therefore all the Perfections of particular Beings exist in God, and that after a more excellent manner than they do in particular Beings themselves.

I.

IN the preceding Contemplations it has been shewn, that the Essence and Idea of God consists in Being it self, and that therefore God is a Being absolutely Perfect. I now further consider, that from the same ground it may be concluded, that, all the Perfections of particular Beings exist in God, and that after a more excellent manner than they do in particular

cular Beings themselves. And first, that all the Perfections of particular Beings do exist in God.

II.

This I collect thus from the Idea of God. If Being it self be therefore absolutely Perfect because it has all the degrees of Being, as has been proved, then by the same proportion it plainly follows, that if Being it self has all the degrees of being that are in all particular Beings, it must have all the Perfection that is in all particular Beings. This consequence I say is undeniable, because Perfection is nothing else but degree of Being. And that Being it self has all the degrees of Being that are in all particular Beings, might be sufficiently concluded from this, That it has all the degrees of Being Simply and Absolutely; which was proved before. But I further infer it thus:

III.

Being it self is the cause of all particular Beings, for all particular Beings are what they are by partaking of Being it self: and if Being it self be the cause of all particular Beings, then it must be also the cause of all the degrees of Being that are in particular Beings, for these can no more rise up into act from themselves, than the particular Beings themselves can. And if Being it self be the cause of all the degrees of Being that are in particular Beings, then it must have in it self all those degrees; for nothing can communicate what it has not. The short is, Whatever is in the effect must pre-exist some way or other in *that* cause upon which it *wholly depends*. But now if Being it self be the cause of all the degrees of Being
that

that are in particular Beings, then particular Beings *wholly depend* upon Being it self; and consequently whatever Perfection is in particular Beings, must exist in Being it self, which was the first Proposition to be proved.

IV.

The next is, That the Perfections of particular Beings do exist in God after a more excellent manner than they do in the particular Beings themselves. For the Prerogative of God above his Creatures does not consist meerly in this, That there are more Perfections in God than he ever *did*, or *will*, or *can* communicate to his Creatures; but that he has also those very Perfections, which they have, in a more eminent manner.

V.

There is indeed a great deal of Perfection and Beauty in the World, enough to affect the *Curious* with the greatest *Pleasure*, and the *Religious* with the greatest *Devotion*. And therefore *St. Austin* discoursing upon that Place of *St. Paul* to the *Romans*, where the *Gentiles* are said to know God, but yet not to glorifie him as God; *Whence, could they know*
 Serm. 149. *him? says he, From the Things which he has made? For do but ask the Beauty of the Sea; ask the Beauty of the dilated and diffused Air; ask the Beauty of the Heavens; ask the Order of the Stars; ask the Sun clarifying the Day with his Brightness; ask the Moon tempering the Darkness of the following Night with her Splendor; ask the Animals which move in the Waters, on the Earth, and in the Air. The Souls which lie hid, the Bodies that are perspicuous, the visible Things that*

All Perfections of Beings exist in God. 37

that are to be govern'd, and the invisible Governors; ask all these, they will all of them give answer, Behold, look upon us, we are Fair. Their Beauty is their Confession. Who made these Mutable Fairs, but the Immutable Fair? But he that would be more sensibly affected with the Beauty of the Universe, let him consult that excellent Draught which the Roman Orator has given of it, which I take to be as fine a *Description* as ever was made, either by his or any other Pen.

*De Nat.
Deorum.
Lib. 2.*

VI.

And 'tis highly reasonable, that there should be a great deal of Beauty in the Creation, since the World was made by him who is Being it self, and consequently Beauty it self, and who must needs imprint his own *Likeness* upon the Things which he has made. For, if God must have all the Perfections which are in the Creature, then God can communicate no other Perfections to the Creature than what he has himself, (he himself having all) and consequently the Creature must partake of the Likeness of God. And therefore it may be said, That God made not only Man, but the whole World, in a larger Sense, after his own Image: And as Art imitates Nature, so Nature imitates God. The short is, if God has *All* of the Creature, then the Creature must have *Something* of God, and therefore must in some Degree resemble him. And says *Plato* in his *Timæus*, πάντα ἐτι μάλιστα ἐβελήθη γίνεσθαι παρ' αὐτῷ. He would have all Things come as nigh himself as might be.

**Lib. 3. Con.
Gent. c. 19.*

And to the same Effect *Aquinas*,* *Res. omnes creatæ*

38 Part I. Contemplation III.

creatae sunt quaedam Imagines primi Agentis:
All created Things are certain Images of the
first Agent.

VII.

But tho' Nature imitates God, yet it happens here, as in most other Imitations, the *Extract* comes far short of the *Original*. God does not only excel the Creatures in having Degrees of Being, which he will not, cannot communicate to them, but also in having their Perfections in a more excellent Manner than they have themselves. Thus that Beauty which charms the Eyes of the Amorous, exists more excellently in God than in the sweetest Face which they admire. And that Harmony which dissolves the Soul into Raptures and Extasies, has a much more perfect Existence in God than in the most agreeable Sounds that can possibly conspire together. The Creature is very unlike God, even where it resembles him, and accordingly the Scripture sometimes makes mention of a Likeness that is between God and his Creatures, as when it says, *Let us make Gen. i. Man after our own Likeness*. Again, at another Time it utterly disowns it, as when it says, *To Isai. xl. 18. whom then will ye liken God, or what Likeness will ye compare unto him?*

VIII.

And that Things should thus fall short of God, even in that very Respect wherein they resemble him, is no more than what Reason will conclude necessary. For God being the very Essence of Being, or Being it self, and therefore indeterminate in Being, and therefore also in Perfection; it follows, that he has not only
all

All Perfections of Beings exist in God. 39

all Kinds of Perfection, but that every Kind of Perfection, which he has must needs be as excellent as is possible in that Kind. Thus for instance, The Beauty that is in God must be as perfect as 'tis possible for *Beauty to be*, and so the Harmony that is in God must be as perfect as 'tis possible for *Harmony to be*. That is, in other Words, the Beauty which is in God must be *Beauty it self*, and the Harmony which is in God must be *Harmony it self*.

IX.

But now 'tis impossible, that Things should exist in the Creature after such a Rate as this. As they are not Being it self, but particular Beings, so every Perfection that is in them is not that *Perfection it self*, in the *Abstract*, but only *Particular, Derivative, and Concrete*. They are beautiful and harmonical, but not Beauty it self, nor Harmony it self. *Beauty it self* can no more be communicated to the Creature than *Being it self* can. All the Essences and Abstract Natures of Things are in God, or rather the very same with God (as I shall shew when I consider the Omniscience of God) and they are but *One*, they cannot be *communicated* or *multiplied*. Their *Images* indeed may, but they themselves cannot, for they are the same with God. There may be many beautiful, or particular Beauties, but there can be but one Beauty it self.

X.

The Beauty therefore that is in the Creature is only a slender Shadow or Reflection of that Beauty it self which is in God, who is the Idea or Essence of Beauty. And as it is derivative from it, so it exists continually by it, and in it,
and

and is every way as much depending upon it as the Reflection in the Glass is upon the Face whose Reflection it is. And as Beauty has a more excellent Way of Existence in the Face it self, than in the Glass; so has it a far more perfect Way of subsisting in God than in any Face or Thing whatsoever. For all Things are Reflections from him, and the whole Creation is but as 'twere one great *Mirrou* or *Glass* of the *Divinity*.

XI.

I end this Contemplation with a very remarkable Passage to this Purpose out of St. *Austin*.

Tu ergo Domine fecisti ea qui pul-
cher es, pulchra sunt enim. Qui
Lib. II. Confes. c. 4. bonus es, bona sunt enim. Qui es,
sunt enim. Nec ita pulchra sunt,
nec ita sunt sicut tu Conditor eorum, cui Com-
parata, nec pulchra sunt, nec bona sunt.
 Thou therefore, O Lord, hast made these Things: Who art fair, for they are fair: Who art good, for they are good: Who art, for they are. But neither are they so fair; neither are they so good; neither are they so as thou their Maker, in Comparison of whom, they are neither fair, nor good, nor are they at all.

The Use of this to Devotion.

THIS may be very much improv'd to the Advantage of Devotion. For the great Let to Devotion is our Love of *Particular* and *Sensible* Good. 'Tis a Charge that may be fasten'd upon the best of us all, more or less, that we are *Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God*.

All Perfections of Beings exist in God. 41

God. And the Love of Pleasure Naturally alienates us from the Love of God. And therefore says St. *John*, *Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World.* And to shew the great Joh. ii. 15. Inconsistency that is between the Love of the World and the Love of God, he further tells us, *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* But now if we could be but once persuaded, that all the Perfections of Particular Beings exist in God, and not only so, but after a more excellent Manner than they do in Particular Beings themselves, we should certainly be very much taken off from the Love of Particular and Sensible Good; we should not be such gross Idolaters as we are in adoring created Beauty, but should adhere to God with more Unity and Entireness of Affection. Sure I am that there is great Reason we should do so, when we consider, that let the Good of the Creature be never so charming, the very same we may find in God with great Perfection. We can propose nothing to our selves in the Creature, but what God has more *perfectly* and more *abundantly*. To what Purpose then should we go off from him, since Change it self can give us no Variety, and we can only *court a New Object*, not *find a New Happiness*.

The Aspiration.

N O, *My fair Delight*, I will never be drawn off from the Love of thee by the Charms of any of thy Creatures. Thou art not only infinitely more excellent than they,
but

but hast their very Excellencies in a more perfect manner than they have or can have. What Temptation then can I have to leave thee? No, O my Fairest, I want Temptation to commend my Love to thee. 'Tis too easie and too cheap a fidelity to adhere to thee, My first Love, when by Changing I can gain no more.

✱ Thou, O Sovereign Fair, hast adorn'd thy Creation with a Tincture of thy Brightness, thou hast shin'd upon it with the light of thy Divine Glory, and hast pour'd forth thy Beauty upon all thy Works. But they are not fair as Thou art Fair, their Beauty is not as Thy Beauty. Thou art Fairer, O my God, than the Children of Men, or the Orders of Angels, and the *Arrows* of thy Psal. 45. Love are *Sharper* than theirs. They are indeed, My God; *thy Arrows are very Sharp*, and were we not too securely fenc'd about with our thick Houses of Clay, would wound us deeper than the Keenest Charms of thy Created Beauties. But these every Day Wound us, while we stand proof against thy Divine Artillery, because these are *Sensible*, and thine only *Intelligible*, these are visible to our *Eyes*, thine only to our *Minds*, which we seldom convert to the Contemplation of thy Beauties.

But, O thou Infinite Fair, did we but once taste and see, did we but Contemplate thy Original Beauty, as we do those faint Images of it that are reflected up and down among our fellow Creatures, as thy Charms infinitely exceed theirs, so would our Love to thee be *Wonderful, passing the Love of Women*.



CONTEMPLATION IV.

Of the Attributes of God in general ; particularly of the Unity of God : Which is proved from his Idea.

I.

Concerning the Attributes of God in general, I have no more to offer than what is commonly taught in the Schools; from which I find no reason to vary, and of which this I think is the summ and substance, *first*, That the Essence of God is in it self, one only general, simple and intire Perfection, and that therefore the Divine Attributes are not to be consider'd as Accidents *really* distinct from the Divine Essence, and if not from the Divine Essence, then not from themselves neither.

II.

But however, Secondly, Since this Divine Essence which in it self is one and the same general Perfection, does exert and display it self variously in its Operations, by reason of the Diversity of Objects, the Attributes of God are by us conceiv'd distinctly. Not that they are so in respect of God, with whom they are really one and the same, and consequently so also among themselves, but only with respect to our manner of conception.

III.

III.

For, *Thirdly*, The Essence of God displays it self variously (as was observ'd before) according to the diversity of Objects. But now the narrowness of our Faculties will not permit us to represent such a various and manifold *display* of Perfection in one, simple and adequate conception. We are fain therefore to supply this defect, by framing several *inadequate* conceptions, whereby we represent God partially and imperfectly; and which we found upon his different Operations; every one of which is conceived as proceeding from a different Perfection in God, corresponding to that particular Operation.

IV.

Now tho' this diversity be not real with respect to God, who is one and the same nature, without composition or complication of Being, but only with respect to variety of Objects and Modes of Operation, yet this is a sufficient ground for distinct conceptions; every one of which may admit of a peculiar definition or explication. The sum is, The Attributes of God are all one and the same as to the *thing signified*, but not as to the *manner of signification*. Or, to word it more Scholastically, they may be mutually affirm'd of one another *in sensu identico*, but not in *sensu formali*. And thus must we be contented to think and talk of God while we see him here in a Glass darkly, till he shall reveal himself to us more perfectly, and we shall see him as he is, and know him as we our selves are known.

V.

This being premised concerning the Attributes of God in general, I proceed now to Contemplate some of those particular Attributes of his, which may derive the greatest influence upon our Piety and Devotion. And among these, I first consider the *Unity* of God, by which I understand not a Generical, or Specifical, but a *Numerical Unity* in opposition to Plurality or Multiplication. That is, That there is One, and One Only God.

VI.

The *Unity* of God has been ever more questioned than his *Existence*, and there have always been more *Polytheists* than *Atheists*. But for my part, I should sooner be an *Atheist* than a *Polytheist*, for I think it a greater absurdity, than that there should be none at all. And I cannot imagine how such a wretched absurdity as *Polytheism* should ever obtain so much as it has both in the *Gentile* and *Christian* World, since without the assistance of any other considerations, it may abundantly be refuted and concluded impossible from the very Idea and Formal conception of God.

VII.

The Idea of God, is Being it self, and Being it self can be but One; which I thus demonstrate. Whatsoever is Infinite in Being can be but One; but Being it self is Infinite in Being; Therefore Being it self can be but One. That Being it self is Infinite in Being, we have proved in the Second Contemplation. The *Proposition*, That whatsoever is Infinite in Being can be but one, is plain. For if there were more Infinities, one must be distinguished from another, otherwise they

46 Part I. Contemplation IV.

they could not be more: for not to be *distinguish-
ed* is to be the *same*. And if one must be distin-
guished from another, then one must have some
degree of Being which the other has not; For
by what else can any thing be distinguished?
And if one must have some degree of Being
which the other has not, then to every one of
these supposed Infinites, some degree of Being
must be wanting, namely, that whereby they
are distinguished. And if so, that none of them
would be infinite in Being. Therefore Plurali-
ty of Infinities in Being, is a contradictory self-
inconsistent Notion, and such as cannot be ad-
mitted by any person that knows what he
affirms.

VIII.

But further, Being it self has all the degrees
of Being, as all other Abstract and universal
Natures have all the perfection of their respec-
tive Orders. But now what has all the degrees
of Being cannot possibly be multiplied. For 'tis
a flat contradiction that more than one should
have all the degrees of Being. Indeed it may
be *communicated*, and there may result as many
Particular and Derivative Beings, as Being it
self is capable of being *Participated*. But it
cannot be *multiplied*, because it has all the de-
grees of Being. And thus 'tis in all other Ab-
stract Essences, they may be *Communicated*,
but they can't be *multiplied*. Thus there may
be many Particular Beauties by the various
participation of Beauty it self. But suppose
Beauty it self to exist, it could not be multi-
plied; there can be but one Beauty it self, be-
cause it has all the degrees of Perfection belong-
ing

ing to its Nature. And beyond all there is nothing.

IX.

For to him that would add another Beauty it self, I would propose this Question. Has this superadded Beauty all the perfection of the first, or has it not? If not, then 'tis not Beauty it self, for that is supposed to have all the Perfection belonging to Beauty. If it has, then 'tis the very same with the other, and consequently 'tis impossible there should be any more than one Beauty it self. And why is the multiplication of *Individuals* impossible, but only for this reason, because every Individual has all the Perfection belonging to *that Individuated Nature*. Which therefore does not admit of Plurality or Multiplication. And consequently Being it self having as much all the degrees of Being as any Individual has all the Perfection of that Individuated Nature, is no more capable of Plurality or Multiplication than any Individual is. There is therefore but one being it self, and therefore but one God, which was the thing to be prov'd.

The use of this to Devotion.

SInce then there can be but one God, as we have reason in the first place to admire and adore that universal Perfection of his Nature, which renders him *incapable of multiplication*, so in the next place we may be hence admonish'd how reasonable it is that we should rest and depend wholly upon him, disclaiming and renouncing all false Gods. And that lastly, we should love him intirely and undividedly, with
all

48 Part I. Contemplation IV.

all our Heart, Mind and Strength, without admitting any other into Partnership or Rivalship with him : Which unity and intireness of Devotion we could not maintain, were there more Gods than one. For no one could then have right to exact all our services, nor could we be obliged, or able, to direct all our services to any *one* of them. And much less could we do so to *all*, since (as our Saviour tell us) *no man can serve even two Masters*, Mat. 6. 24.

The Aspiration.

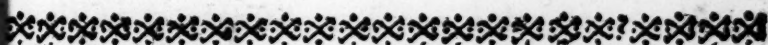
O Thou Mighty *One-All*, who art too great to be *multiplied*, and yet too full not to be *communicated*, what a *Greatness*, what a *Fulness* is this of thine ! O *Rich Solitude*, how unlike is all Created Excellence to thine ! Other things are to be admired for their *Numbers*, Thou for thy *oneness* and *singularity* ; they glory in their *multitudes*, but 'tis the Prerogative of thy Perfection to be *Alone*.

In thee, my only Centre, I rest, upon thee I wholly depend, for I have none in Heaven but thee, and none upon Earth in comparison of thee. I utterly renounce therefore all absolute Power and Supremacy besides thine, and I will fear none but thee, and obey none but thee. Thou only shalt have Dominion over me. I am only thine, and thee only will I serve.

Many, O God, are the Beauties which thou hast made, and thy whole Creation is fill'd with thy Glory. *There are threescore Cant. 6. Queens, and fourscore Concubines, and Virgins without number ; But my love, my undefiled, is but one.* Take then to thy

thy self the Empire of my Heart. For all that deserves the name of Love there shall be thine. O that it were more enlarged for thy reception: But thou shalt have it *all*, and I will love thee with my whole Heart, tho' that whole be but little?

O my only Delight, other Gods besides thee, and other Lords besides thee, have often usurp'd a Dominion over me. But *my Heart is now fix'd, O God, my Heart is fix'd*. It is fix'd upon thee, and how can it ever wander out of the Sphere of thy Beauty! Or what Beauty is there whose influence may vye with thine? Or how can I love any but one, when that one, and none but that one, is infinitely Lovely.



CONTEMPLATION V.

Of the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God.

I.

THE Unity of God I have demonstrated in the preceding Contemplation. And now to obviate a scruple that may thence arise, namely, how one single solitary Being should be sufficient to preside over all the *Motions* of the *Natural*, and all the *Affairs* of the *Moral* World, I thought it convenient to proceed next to some of those Attributes, which, when well consider'd, will make it plain, that this Being, tho' but *one*, is abundantly qualify'd for the Government and Management of the

C

whole

50 Part I. Contemplation V.

whole Universe. And among these, the *Omniscience* and *Omnipresence* of God are most eminent and conspicuous, which I shall here therefore joyntly Contemplate.

II.

And first of the *Omniscience* of God. This is a most wonderful and amazing Attribute, consider it which way we will, for it denotes no less than a full knowledge and thorough comprehension of all the things that either are, have been, or shall be. But in the way that I shall now consider it, 'twill appear clothed with peculiar Circumstances of Admiration, and is indeed a Theme more fit for the Contemplation of an Angel, than for the Pen of a mortal Theorist. Here therefore I must beg the peculiar Attention of my Reader, and above all, the peculiar Assistance of that Spirit which *searcheth all things, yea, the Deep things of God.*

III.

Now in treating of God's Omniscience, I shall do two things, First, prove that he is Omniscient; Secondly, represent the manner of his Omniscience. To shew that God is Omniscient, I must first consider what *Knowledge* is in general. Now this I define to be in short, a *Comprehension of Truth*. For the clearer understanding of which, the Distinction of Truth must be attended to. Truth then is either of the Object, or of the Subject. And both these are again subdivided. For Truth of the Object is either Simple, whereby a Being is really what it is. Or Complex, which denotes those necessary Habitues or Respects, whereby one thing stands affected towards another as to

Affir-

Affirmation or Negation. Then as for Truth of the Subject, we understand by it either a just Conformity between the Understanding and the Object, which is *Logical Truth*, or between the Words and the Understanding, which is *Moral Truth* or Veracity.

IV.

The Truth with which we are here concern'd, is Truth of the Object. For to know is so to comprehend things both as to their Simple Natures, and as to their Habitues and Relations, as to Compound what is really Compounded, and to Divide what is really Divided. To have our Understandings thus accommodated to the Respects and Habitues of things, is *Knowledge*. As for Truth of the Subject in the second sense, as it signifies a Conformity between the Words and the Understanding, we have here nothing to do with it, as being altogether foreign to our present purpose. And in the first acceptation, as it signifies a just conformity between the Understanding and the Object, 'tis but another word for *Knowledge*. For Truth of the Subject in this sense is the conformity of the Mind to Truth of the Object. And so also is Knowledge. To know therefore, is to think of things conformably to their Simple Natures and Mutual Habitues, or, as I first defined it, to *Comprehend Truth*.

V.

This being premised, That Knowledge is nothing else but a Comprehension of Truth, that is, the having things in the *Mind* with the same Relations of Composition or Division, as they stand mutually affected in *themselves*, I thus argue: That Being which Comprehends all Truth is Omniscient.

52 Part I. Contemplation V.

But God Comprehends all Truth.

Therefore God is Omniscient.

The first Proposition is plain from the Definition of Knowledge. The Conclusion therefore depends wholly upon the proof of the Second; namely, that God comprehends all Truth.

VI.

Now for the Demonstration of this Proposition, I desire but this one *Postulatum*, that there are Eternal and Necessary Truths, that is, that there are eternal and immutable Relations and Habitudes of things toward one another, by way of Affirmation or Negation. This is what, I suppose, any body will give me for the asking, though I have no great reason to be overthankful for it, it being a thing so very unquestionable, and withal a Proposition of this *unlucky* quality, that 'tis as much establish'd by the Denial of it, as by the Affirming it. For should any Sceptical Person be so hardy as to say, that there is no such thing as Eternal and Necessary Truth, I would ask him this Question: Was that Proposition always true, or was it not? If it was not always true, then there was once Eternal and Necessary Truth, and if once so, then ever so: But if it was always True, then by his own Confession, there is such a thing as Eternal and Necessary Truth. This therefore must be allow'd.

VII.

It being therefore supposed that there are Etenal and Necessary Truths, the next Proposition that I shall lay down is this, that the simple Essences of things must be also Eternal and Necessary. For the proof of which Proposition

position I consider first, that as Truth of the Subject depends upon, and necessarily supposes Truth of the Object, so Truth of the Object Complex depends upon, and necessarily supposes Truth of the Object Simple: That is in other Words, The Habitudes and Relations of Simple Essences, depend upon and necessarily suppose the Reality of their respective Simple Essences. As therefore there can be no such thing as Truth of the Subject, without Truth of the Object, to which it may be conformable; so neither can there be Truth of the Object Complex without Truth of the Object Simple, that is, there can be no mutual Habitudes or Relations of things as to Affirmation or Negation, without the Reality of the things themselves.

VIII.

For I consider that these Habitudes and Respects, as to Affirmation or Negation, wherein consists objective Truth Complex, do result from the Simple Essences, and can no more subsist by themselves than any other relations can; for the existence of which the Schools themselves make it necessary that they have their *subject* and *term*, upon the Position of which they immediately result, and upon the destruction of which they as immediately cease. As other relations therefore cannot subsist without the existence of *subject* and *term*, so neither can these Habitudes as to Affirmation or Negation, subsist without the real existence of the *Essences* themselves so related.

IX.

But this perhaps will be better illustrated by a particular Instance. Let then this be the ob-

54 Part I. Contemplation V.

jective Truth Complex, *Two Circles touching one another inwardly cannot have the same common Center.* This is a true Proposition. But I here demand, How can it possibly have this certain habitude of Division or Negation, unless there be two such distinct simple Essences as Circle and Center? Certainly there can be no Reference or Relation where there is nothing real to support it.

X.

This Point therefore being gain'd, That truth of the Object Complex depends upon, and necessarily supposes truth of the Object Simple, and that there can be no mutual habitudes or relations of Essences, as to composition and division, without the Simple Essences themselves; Hence it will necessarily follow, that whensoever the one does exist, the other must exist also; and consequently, if the one be Eternal, the other must be also Eternal. And thus (to recur to the former Instance) if this be a Proposition of Eternal Truth, viz. *Two Circles touching one another inwardly cannot have the same common Center*, then the two distinct Simple Essences of Circle and Center must have an eternal and necessary existence. The short is, there can be no connexion or relation between things that are not, or that do not exist, for being with this or that habitude to another thing, implies *simple Being*, and for one thing to be another, infers and supposes it *to be simply*. And if there can be no Connexion or Relation between things that are not, then also there can be no *Eternal* connexion or relation between things that have not an *Eternal* Existence. For things cannot be related before they are. But there are such
Eternal

Eternal habitudes and relations, therefore the simple Essences of things are also Eternal. Which was the Proposition next to be proved.

XI.

I know very well this is not according to the *Decrees* of the *Peripatetick* School, which has long since condemn'd it as Heretical Doctrin, to say, that the Essences of things do exist from Eternity. But I have Meditated much upon these things, and I must needs say, that I think it a very certain and very useful Theorem, and that 'tis utterly impossible to give an intelligible account of the *Stability* of Science, or how there should be *Propositions* of *Eternal Truth*, but upon this Hypothesis. And I should be thankful to any of the *Peripatetick Dissenters* who would undertake to shew me how there may.

XII.

I know they endeavour to do it by telling us (and 'tis the only Plea they have to offer) that these habitudes are not attributed *absolutely* to the simple Essences as in actual being, but only *Hypothetically*, that whensoever they shall exist, they shall also carry such relations to one another. There is, says the *Peripatetick*, only a *conditional* connexion between the Subject and the Predicate, not an *absolute* position of either. This goes smoothly down with the young Scholar at his *Logick Lecture*, and the Tutor applauds his distinction, and thinks he has thereby quitted his hands of a very *dangerous Heresie*.

XIII.

But now to this I return the same Answer (for I need give no other) that I have in my *Metaphysical Essay*. First, I say, that these habitudes are not (as is supposed) only by way

of Hypothesis, but absolutely attributed to the simple Essences, as actually existing. For when I say, for instance, that every part of a Circle is equally distant from the Center; this Proposition does not hang in *suspence*, then to be actually verified when the things shall exist in *Nature*, but is at *present* actually true, as actually true as ever it will or can be; and consequently I may thence infer, that the things themselves already are. There is no necessity, I confess, they should exist in *Nature*, which is all that the Objection proves, but *exist* they must. For of nothing there can be no affection.

XIV.

But, *Secondly*, Suppose I grant what the Objecter would have, that these habitudes are not absolutely attributed to the simple Essences, but only by way of Hypothesis. Yet I don't see what he can gain by this concession. For certainly thus much at least is attributed to the simple Essences at *present*, that whensoever they *shall* exist, such and such habitudes will attend them. I say, thus much is attributed *actually*, and at *present*. But now let any Peripatetick of 'em all tell me how any thing can any way be said of that which is not. And besides, 'tis a weak evasion to say that things are not related thus or thus as actually existing, but only conditionally, supposing their existence. For I deny that any thing can be any way related that does *not actually exist*. And 'tis as good as a contradiction to say otherwise. When therefore the Peripatetick talks of a *conditional connexion* between the Subject and the Predicate, and that neither is put *absolutely*, I say,

say, that the connexion is as absolute as it can or ever will be, and that a non-existing subject cannot have any Predicate, or be any way related. And all this I bind upon him by a Principle of his own, that *of nothing there can be no affection*. And let him unwind himself if he can.

XV.

Having thus far clear'd out way by making it evident, that the simple Essences of things are Eternal. The next thing that I consider is, that since they are not Eternal in their *Natural subsistencies*, they must be Eternal in some other way of subsisting. And that must be in some understanding, or by way of *Ideal subsistence*.

XVI

For there are but two conceivable ways how any thing may exist, either *out of* all understanding, or *within* some understanding. If therefore the simple Essences of things are Eternal, but not *out of* all understanding, it remains they must have an Eternal existence in some understanding. Which is what I call an *Ideal subsistence*. There is therefore another way of existing besides that in *Rerum Natura*, namely in the *Mundus Archetypus*, or the Ideal World, where all the *Rationes rerum*, or simple Essences of things have an Eternal and Immutable existence, before ever they enter upon the Stage of Nature.

XVII.

I further consider, that this understanding wherein the simple Essences of things have an Eternal existence, must be an Eternal understanding. For an Essence can no more Eternal-

ly exist in a Temporary understanding, than a Body can be infinitely extended in a finite space. Now this Eternal understanding can be no other than the understanding of God. The simple Essences of things therefore do Eternally exist in the understanding of God.

XVIII.

But the mode of this must be further explain'd. For it being an unquestion'd Truth, that God is a simple and uncompounded Being; and consequently, that there is nothing in God that is not God himself. As the Schools also rightly have pronounced; We must not conceive these simple Essences as accidents inhering in God, or as Beings really distinct from God, this not comporting with the *simplicity* of the Divine Nature.

XIX.

The simple Essences of things therefore can be nothing else but the Divine Essence it self considered with his Connotation, as variously representative or exhibitivive of things, and as variously imitable or participable by them. As the Divine Essence, is thus or thus imitable or partakable, so are the Essences of things distinguished *specifically* one from another; and according to the *multifariousness* of this Imitability, so are the *possibilities* of Being. From the degrees of this Imitability, are the *orders* and degrees of Being, and from the variety of it, is their *multiplicity*.

XX.

The simple Essences of things, thus existing in the Divine Essence, according to these modes of Imitability and Participation, are what we are taught in the *Platonick School* to call *Idea's*.
These,

These, in the Language of the Divine Philosophers are *πρῶτα νοητά*, the first Intelligibles, and *ἔσθ' ὄντων μέτρα*, the measures of the things that are, and *τὰ ἀληθινὰ ὄντα*, the things that truly are, and *αἰώνια παρδείγματα*, Eternal patterns, and *ἀεὶ ταῦτα καὶ ἀσάυτως ἔχοντα*, things which are always the same and unchangeable, and *τὰ μὴ γινόμενα ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ὄντα*, things that are not generated, but are always; and again *μὴτε γινόμενα, μὴτε ἀπολλύμενα*, that were neither generated, nor will be destroyed. Concerning which, thus Cicero, *Hæc Plato negat gigni, sed semper esse, & Ratione & Intelligentia contineri*. These, Plato denies ever to have been generated, but that they always are, and are contain'd in Reason and Intelligence.

XXI.

Further, these Essences of things, or Ideas thus existing in God, are the true and proper Objects of all Sciences, and (if I may use the Apostle's expression in another case) *σύλη καὶ ἐδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας*, the pillar and ground of truth. These supposed, 1 Tim. iii. 'tis easie to account for the Stability of Science, and for Propositions of Eternal Truth, but without them 'tis absolutely impossible. For all things in their Natural Subsistencies are Temporary, Flux, Mutable and Corruptible, and what is so can never stand under Eternal and Immutable relations.

XXII.

Further, these Essences are the *Specificall Models and Platforms* of all the things that are in this *Ectypal* World. According to these Eternal Exemplars were they made; and as is their Conformity to these Measures, so is their Perfection.

60 Part I. Contemplation V.

Perfection. For 'tis impossible that God should make a World with Counsel and Design, unless he make it according to something, and that can be nothing else but something existing within himself, something in this *Ideal* and *Archetypal* World. For as *Aquinas* well observes, *In all things that are not made by chance, the Form must necessarily be the end of Generation.* But now the Agent
Prim. does not act for the Form, but
Part. Q. 15. only as far as the Similitude of
Ar. Prim. the Form is in him.

XXIII.

And what if I should further say, that this *Ideal* World, this Essence of God considered as variously exhibitivè and representative of things, is no other than the Divine λόγος, the Second Person in the ever Blessed Trinity. This I think highly agreeable to reason; for I know of no Hypothesis that would so intelligibly make out the Eternal Generation of the Son of God: For according to this account, the Son of God must be a *Substantial* and *Multifarious* thought of God the Father, and how this may be generated, and yet be co-eternal with God the Thinker, is not very hard to conceive. Since, if an Angel had been Eternal, his thought must have been so too.

XXIV.

I shall add in confirmation of this Notion, a signal passage of the great Platonist *Marsilius Ficinus*, thus discoursing of the Eternal Generation of the Son of God. *Omnis vita*
Tom. i. *prolem suam, &c. Every Life first*
pag. 18. *generates its Off-spring within it self*
cap. 13. *before it does abroad without it self;*
and

and by how much the more excellent the Life is, by so much the more inwardly to its self does it generate its off-spring. So the vegetative Life both in Trees and in Animals generates first the Seed, and the Animal within its own Body, before it casts forth either abroad. So the Sensitive, which is more excellent than the Vegetative Life, brings forth by the fancy an Image or Intension of things in it self, before it moves the Members and forms them in External Matter. But this first Birth of the fancy, because 'tis in the very Soul is therefore nearer to the Soul than the Birth of the Vegetative Life, which is not in the Soul, but in the Body. So again, the Rational Life, which is more excellent than the Sensitive, brings forth in it self the Reason both of things, and of it self, as it were an off-spring, before it brings it into the light, either by Speech or Action. This first Birth of Reason is nearer to the Soul than the Birth of Fancy. For the Rational Power is reflected upon its own Birth, and by that upon it self, by seeking, knowing, and loving its own act and it self, which is not done by the Fancy. So again, the Angelical Life, which is more excellent than the Rational, brings forth in it self, by a kind of Divine Instinct, the Notions of it self and of things, before it discharges them upon the Matter of the World. This Birth is more interior to an Angel, than Reason is to her, because 'tis neither derived from External Objects, nor changed. Wherefore the Divine Life being the most eminent and fruitful of all, must needs generate an Off-spring more like her self than any of the rest: And this it generates in it self by understanding, before it brings forth anything with-

62 Part I. Contemplation V.

without. God therefore perfectly understanding himself, and in himself all things, he conceives in himself a perfect Notion of himself, and of all things, which is the equal and full Image of God, and the more than full Exemplar or Pattern of the World, &c.

XXV.

Thus is this Notion of the Ideal World, or of the Essence of God, being variously exhibitive and representative of the Essences of things, made use of by this great Theorist, to explain both the Nature of the Second Person of the Trinity, and the Mode of his Eternal Generation. And I think it does both much better than any other, and indeed as far as conceivable by human understanding. So highly useful is this Doctrin of Idea's, when rightly understood, to unfold the profoundest Mysteries of the *Christian Religion* as well as of *Philosophy*: And so great reason had St. Austin to say, *Tanta vis in Ideis constituitur, ut nisi his intellectis, sapiens esse nemo possit.* There's so much moment in Idea's, that without the understanding of these, no Man can be Wise.

XXVI.

And I further consider, that this is no less according to the Voice of Scripture than of Natural Reason. Saint John speaking of the second Person of the Trinity, says, *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.* He says also that all things were made by him, or according to him *δι' αὐτοῦ*. And he further says, *That he is the true light, that lightens every man that cometh into the world.* Now what can this signifie but this *Ideal World*, or the
Essence

Effence of God as variously exhibitiv and representative of things? For observe, he calls him $\lambda\omicron\gamma\Theta$, which here signifies the same as the inward conception or Idea, he says that he was in the *Beginning*, and that he was *with God*, and that he *was God*, and that all things were made *by him*; Thus far it must be allowed that the agreement is very exact. As for the the last part of the character, How this can be said to be the true Light which lightens every Man that comes into the World, this I shall explain when I come to consider the *Nature of Man*, who as I shall shew, sees and knows all that he sees and knows in this *Ideal World*, which may therefore be said to be his *Light*.

XXVII.

Again, this second Person is said to be the *Wisdom of his Father*, to be the *Character of his Person*, both which expressions denote him to be the same with this Ideal World. And by him God is said to have *made the Worlds*. That is according to the eternal Exemplars or Platforms in this Ideal World. To Heb. i. which I may add by way of overplus, that noble Description of the Eternal and Substantial Wisdom given us in the Seventh Chapter of the Book of *Wisdom*, $\text{Ἄριστος τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμειος, ἀπὸρροια τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς χάριτος, ἡ ἐκείνου τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας, καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀκατάβητης αὐτοῦ.}$
The Breath (or Vapour) of the *Power of God*, and an *efflux* (or Emanation) from the glory of the *Almighty*, a *clear Mirrour* (or Looking-glass) of his *active energetick vertue*, and the *Image of his goodness*. And what can all this be but the Effence of God as exhibitiv, the
Ideal

Ideal World? Lastly, I would have it considered how what our Saviour says of himself, *I am the Truth*, and what the Apostle says of him, that he is the *Wisdom of his Father*, can be verify'd any other way but by this Hypothesis.

XXVIII.

I have the longer insisted on this to shew not only the *Truth* of this *Ideal World*, and that the Essences of things have *eternal* Existence in it, but also how very useful this Notion is for the Establishment of the *Divinity* of Christ, and for the explication of his *Eternal generation* from the Father, which is also a further confirmation that the Notion is true and solid. So great a guard is true *Platonism* against *Socinianism*.

XXIX.

Hence also we may be instructed how to understand that common Axiom of the Schools, *that the Truth of every thing is its conformity to the Divine understanding*: This must by no means be understood of the Mind of God as *Conceptive*, that is, as reflecting upon himself as *Exhibitive*; for the Truth of the Divine Intellect as *Conceptive*, depends, upon its conformity with the truth of things, not the truth of things upon that. But it must be meant of the Mind of God as *Exhibitive*, that is, of this *Ideal World*, for upon this all Truth depends, and every thing, and every Proposition is so far true as 'tis conformable with it. For indeed the intellect of God as *Exhibitive* is the *Cause* and *Measure* of all *Truth*.

XXX.

And, 'twas for want of the help of this Notion that that Keen Wit *Descartes* blundered so horribly in stating the dependance of Propositions of Eternal Truth, upon the Intellect of God. He saw 'twas necessary (as indeed it is) to make God the Cause of Truth, and that Truth must some way or other depend upon him. But then he makes it depend upon the Mind of God as *Conceptive*, and that things are so only because God is pleased so to conceive them. And this he carries so high, as to say, that even in a Triangle, three Angles would not have been equal to two Right ones, had not God been pleased so to conceive and make it. Now I am for the dependance of truth upon the Divine Intellect as well as he, but not so as to make it *Arbitrary* and *Contingent*, and Consequently not upon the Divine Intellect as *Conceptive*, but only as *Exhibitive*. That is, that things are therefore True in as much as they are conformable to those *standing* and *immutable Ideas*, which are in the mind of God as Exhibitive, and Representative of all the whole Possibility of Being.

XXXI.

Now if after all, this Ideal way of things subsisting from all Eternity in God, should seem strange (as I suppose it will to those who are unexercised in these Contemplations) I shall only further say, First, that it must be infinitely more strange that there should be Eternal Truths, that is, Eternal Relations and Habitudes of simple Essences, or things, without the Co-eternal existence of the things themselves
so,

so related. For what should support such Relations? The simple Essences therefore must exist eternally, if their Relations do; and where can that be but in the Mind of God?

XXXII.

Secondly, I say that this Ideal way of subsisting, ought not to seem such a Bugbear as some make it, since 'tis necessary not only for the saving of Propositions of Eternal Truth, before their Subjects exist in Nature, but even when they do. For even while things have a Natural subsistence, the Propositions concerning them are not, cannot be verified according to their *Natural*, but according to their *Ideal* subsistencies. Thus we demonstrate several Propositions concerning a Right Line, a Circle, &c. when yet in the mean time 'tis most certain, that none of these are to be found in Nature, according to that exactness supposed in our Demonstration. Such and such Affections therefore do not belong to them, as they are in *Nature*, and therefore they must belong to them as they are in the *Ideal World*, or not at all.

XXXIII.

And if this be true in Propositions, whose Subjects exist in Nature, much more is it in Eternal Propositions, whose simple Essences have not always a Natural existence. These can no otherwise stand, but by supposing the Co-eternal existence of Simple Essences in the Ideal World.

XXXIV.

I shall add but this one Consideration more upon this Head, that there is no greater sign of the soundness of a Truth, than when its pro-
fest Adversaries do unawares fall in with it. And this I take to be the case here. The
Schoolmen

Schoolmen who stand devoted to the Authority of *Aristotle*, do notwithstanding by a kind of *blind Parturiency*, light oftentimes upon such Notions, which if thoroughly sifted must needs come to the same with what we have hitherto contended for. For I would fain know what they can mean else by the celebrated *Glass* of the *Divinity*? What can this be but the *Ideal World* representing all the *Essences* of things? And what else can they mean when they say (as they commonly do) of *Science*, that it is not of *Singulars*, as being flux, temporary, mutable and contingent, but of *Abstract* and *Universal* Natures? What is this but in other words to confess the necessity of *Eternal Essences* or *Ideas* existing out of and before those *Singulars* whose *Essences* they are, in order to the salving the *stability* of *Science*? Thus do these Men stumble upon *Truth* blindfold, but not discerning her through her veil, they let her go again.

XXXV.

Nay, even *Aristotle* himself after all his zealous opposition of *Plato's* *Ideas* has in the fourth of his *Metaphysicks* come about to him again, and crossed the very Road which he studied so carefully to avoid. For discoursing against the *Scepticks* who allowed no certainty of *Science*, the first shews the ground of their mistake to consist in this, that they thought *Singulars* and *Sensibles* existing without, to be the only Objects of *Science*. His words are, ἀπὸν τῆς δόξης τῶν, &c. *The Original of these Mens mistake was this, because Truth is to be lookt for in things, and they conceiv'd the only things to be Sensibles, in which it is certain there is much of the Indeterminate Nature. Wherefore they*
perceiving

68 Part I. Contemplation V.

perceiving all the Nature of Sensibles to be movable, or in perpetual flux and mutation, since nothing can possibly be verified or constantly affirmed concerning that which is not the same, but changable, concluded that there should be no Truth at all, nor certainty of Science. Those things which are the only Objects of it, never continuing the same.

XXXVI.

Thus having opened the grounds of the Sceptical Doctrin, in opposition to it, he thus adds, ἀξιωμαὶν αὐτὲς ὑπολαμβάνειν, &c. we would have these Men therefore to know, that there is another kind of Essence of things, besides that of Sensibles, to which belongeth, neither motion, nor corruption, nor any generation at all.

XXXVII.

Observe here, that Aristotle does not deny the Consequence of the Sceptick's Argument. No, he allows if the Essences of things are not stiddy and immutable, that there can be no certainty of Science. But he denies his *minor Proposition*, and tells him that he goes upon a wrong Hypothesis, in supposing that there are no other Essences of things but Singulars and Sensibles, in opposition to which he says, that there are other Essences of things which are immoveable, incorruptible, and ingenerable. And that 'tis upon these that all Science is founded. Now who would desire a better Establishment of Platonick Ideas, than what Aristotle himself has here given? Let any Intelligent Person judge whether this be not a plain giving up the Cause. So hard is it for a Man not to contradict himself, when once he comes to contradict Truth.

XXXVIII.

XXXVIII.

It being now from the Premises sufficiently concluded, that the Ideas or Simple Essences of things have an Eternal existence in God, and the manner of this their existence being sufficiently explained, the next advance of my Contemplation is this, that since all the Simple Essences of things do exist in the mind of God, *there* must also be the Repository of all their several Habitues and Respects, these naturally arising from the other, by way of Natural Result. For as the Relations of Essences cannot exist without the Essences themselves, so neither can the Essences exist without being accompanied with such their Essential Relations. And as before we argued from the Position of the Habitues to the position of the Simple Essences, so now we may as well argue from the Position of the Simple Essences to the Position of their Habitues.

XXXIX.

Thus for instance; as from this Eternal Habitude, *viz.* that a Circle of such a determinate Circumference will have such a determinate Diameter, I may conclude, that the Essence of such a Circle does eternally exist; so again supposing such a Circle to exist, 'tis as necessary it should retain such a *Diameter*. And so in all other instances, the Essence argues and infers the Habitude, as well as the Habitude does the Essence. For 'tis here as in all other Relations which immediately result upon the position of the *Subject* and *Term*.

XL.

This admitted, I now consider that there is now nothing wanting to infer the Omniscience
of

of God. For since the simple Essences of things do all exist in God, and since these are ever accompany'd with all their Habitues and Relations, and since these are nothing else but *Truth*, it follows that all Truth is in God. I say God comprehending within himself all the Ideas and Essences of things with all their possible References and Respects, comprehends *all Truth*, the whole *field* of Truth within himself, which is the same as to be *Omniscient*, Knowledge being nothing else but a *Comprehension of Truth*, as was before defined.

XLI.

And thus we have not only *proved* the Omniscience of God, but in a great measure represented the *manner* of it. Concerning this therefore I shall only further remark that the manner of the Divine Knowledge is the most Noble and Perfect, that can possibly be conceiv'd. For 'tis not by any derivative Phantasms, or Secondary Images of things, but *per αὐτοπαρουσίαν τῶν πραγμάτων*, by the very immediate and essential Presence of the things themselves. He has all his Knowledge at the *first hand*, he sees, nay he is *possess* of the very Essence of things, he is the very Source and Fountain of all Truth, nay he is *Truth it self*. And besides, his Knowledge is all simple and uncompounded, without Reasoning and inferring, premising and concluding, for he has ever before him in one simple view the whole Field of Truth, and with one single Act of *Intuition* glances through the whole Possibility of Being. For this *Word of God*, this λόγος, who is the Essential Wisdom of his Father, is *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword, piercing even*

to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the Heart. Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his sight. But all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, Heb. 13. 12. with whom we have to do.

XLII.

Thus is this own single solitary Being, God, qualified for the government of the World upon the account of his *Knowledge*. He is so also in respect of his being *Present* to the World he is to govern. For he is *Omnipresent*, as well as *Omniscient*: Which is the next Attribute of God; which in this Contemplation I undertook to consider.

XLIII.

The Omnipresence of God has been more questioned than any one of his Attributes, both among the *Ancients*, and among the *Moderns*. *Aristotle* in his *Metaphysicks* says that the first Mover must necessarily be either in the *Center*, or in the *Circle* or *Circumference*. That is, according to him, either in the middle of the Earth, or in the Extream Heaven. And the latter has by most of the old Philosophers been assigned for his Residence. In the *Church*, the more Ancient *Jews* confined him to the Temple of *Jerusalem*. And of late years this Doctrin of the Partial and limited Presence of God has been renewed by *Voorstius*, Professor of Divinity at *Leyden*, who asserts that God is only in Heaven as to his Essence, and elsewhere only in respect of his Wisdom, Power and Providence.

XLIV.

XLIV.

But that God is every where Essentially Present, both in every part of the World, and also in all *Extra-mundan* Spaces, is most certain from the very Idea of God. 'Tis impossible that Being it self should be excluded from any part of Being. For every part of Being partakes of, and subsists in and by Being it self. And Besides, Being it self is *indeterminate* in Being (as was proved in the second Contemplation) but now what is indeterminate in Being, is also indeterminate in existing, for existing follows Being as the Act of it, and to exist indeterminately is the same as to be Omnipresent. God therefore who is Being it self, is also an Omnipresent Being.

XLV.

Concerning the manner of this Omnipresence of God, I think I may safely determine that he is every where present, not only *Virtually* and *Efficaciously* by his Wisdom and Power, but also *Substantially* and *Essentially*. For Power and Wisdom is not any thing really different from the Essence of God. Neither can the Power of God be conceived to be any where, but his Essence must be there too. But after what special manner this Essence of God is Omnipresent, whether by way of an Infinite Amplitude and Extension, as some think, or else by way of a Point, so as to be whole in the whole, and whole in every part of the World, as others will have it, I neither know, nor shall offer to determine. *Such Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it.* 'Tis sufficient to know, that God is so every way Immense and Omnipresent,

sent, as not to be *included* in any place, nor to be *excluded* from any. For the rest, we must say with the *Psalmist*, *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: Psal. 145. And his greatness is unsearchable.*

The Use of this to Devotion.

THE Consideration of the Divine *Omniscience* and *Omnipresence*, is of excellent use to all the purposes of a Christian life, as well as to the Interest of Devotion in particular. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect*, says God Gen. 17. to *Abraham*. Implying that the best Method of Perfection, was to live as in the sight and presence of God. And so the *Psalmist*, *I have set God always before me, therefore I shall not fall.* Psal. 16. Implying, that if any thing would keep him from falling, this would. For can there be any greater restraint upon our actions, any stronger preservative against sin, than duly to consider the *Presence* and *Inspection* of God? *In virtutis oculis vivendum*; so again the *Ancients*, We must live as in the Eyes of *Vertue*. They thought it an excellent expedient against Vice to have the *Idea of Vertue* always before one: And so no doubt it is. Nay, we see *less* will do, and that the Morals of Men are very much secured by living in the *Eye* of the *World*: Nay *Seneca* goes lower yet, and tells us, That *Magna pars peccatorum tolleretur, si peccatoris testis affisteret.* A great deal of our wickedness
D would

would be prevented, if as Men were about to to sin, one single witness were to stand by. But alas, what are such expedients as these to the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God? No consideration certainly is comparable to this. Will a Man commit Murther in the open Court, before the Face of his Judge? Nay, shall the presence of a *Child* divert thee from sinning? A *Child* that knows not the difference between good and evil, that wants understanding to censure and condemn what he sees, and has neither Authority nor Power to punish thee. Shall such a one deter thee from sin, and dash in pieces the frame of thy ill designs, and darest thou sin before thy God? Darest thou do works of Darkness in the presence of him who is *pure Light*, and in whom there is no Darkness at all? Darest thou rush on when the Angel of God's

Presence stands in the way with a Psal. 114. drawn Sword? The *Psalmist* says, Tremble thou earth at the presence of God, and darest thou sin in his Presence? No, thou wouldst not dare, if thou didst well consider it. 'Tis a consideration, this, That if well heeded, and attended to, would give a *Law* to our privacies and retirements, compose the inmost recesses of our Minds, and not suffer a Thought or Passion to rebel. We should then stand in awe and not sin, and be as Composed in our Closets as in a Theater, or a Religious Assembly. For, indeed, to him that considers God as every where present, and a strict observer of him and his actions, every place is a *Temple*, and accordingly he will put off his Shoes from his Feet, cleanse and purifie his affections,

affections, because the place whereon he stands is *Holy Ground*.

Thus advantagious is the influence of these two Considerations to good life in general ; as for their special usefulness to Devotion, we may hence collect, *First*, That we ought to have our Minds always in a Divine Frame and Temper, and always compos'd with the greatest Awefulness and Reverence, Serioufness, Gravity and Silence of Spirit, as being ever in the Presence, and under the direct Inspection of the Great God.

Secondly, That we ought to pray to him with all Humility and Reverence, both of Soul and Body, and with an humble confidence of being heard by him where-ever we are, or however we deliver our selves, whether by *Vocal* or *Mental* Prayer.

Thirdly, That we ought in our Prayers to use great fixedness and attention of Mind, without any wandrings or impertinent mixtures of foreign thoughts, which are never more ready to croud into our Minds, than when we are at our Devotions, and yet are never so absurd as then.

Fourthly, That we ever commend our Cause to God, who sees and knows all things, and be well satisfied with his Judgment and Approbation, when ever our Innocence is falsely charged by the World.

And *Lastly*, That we ought never to repine, or be discontented at the Affairs of the World, but rather trust and rely upon the all-wise conduct of him who sees from end, to end, knows

how to bring Light out of Darknes, and disposes all things sweetly.

The Aspiration.

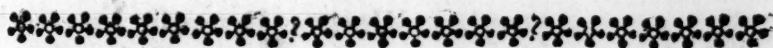
O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me, thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts long before. Thou art about my Path, and about my Bed, and spiest out all my ways. For, lo, there is not a word in my Tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. Thou hast fashioned me behind and before, and laid thine Hand upon me. Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I go then from thy Presence? If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there: If go down to Hell, thou art there also. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there also shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me. If I say, peradventure the Darknes shall cover me, then shall my Night be turned to Day. Yea, the Darknes is no Darknes with thee, but the Night is as clear as the Day; the Darknes and Light to thee are both alike.

Do thou then, O my God, so imprint the Sense of this thy Omniscience and Omnipresence upon every Faculty and Power of my Soul, that I may ever think, speak, and act as in the Light of thy All-seeing Eye, and as immediately surrounded, and intimately possessed with the Glory of thy Presence. O fill me with the profoundest Awe and Reverence, compose my levities, confirm my doubtfulness, and fix my wandrings, and make me ever
satisfied

Of the Omnipotence of God. 77

satisfied with the Methods of thy Wise Providence.

And when by the Meditation of this thy Knowledge and Presence, I shall learn to demean my self in any measure as I ought; Grant that upon the same consideration, I may content my self with thy Divine Approbation and Allowance, whatever I am thought of in Man's Judgment. *Finally, O my God, Grant I may so set thee before me here, that I may not be afraid to appear before thee hereafter. Amen.*



CONTEMPLATION VI.

Of the Omnipotence of God.

I.

THE next Attribute, whereby this One God becomes qualified for the Government of the Universe, is his *Omnipotence*. Whereby may be understood, and commonly is, a Power of doing whatsoever is *possible* to be done. But in this there is some difficulty, from which we must disengage our Notion.

II.

For, whereas every thing that is possible, is made the Object of the Divine Power, a nice enquirer may here demand, what do you mean by *Possible*? For Possible has its denomination from *Power*, and therefore must be measured

78 Part I. Contemplation VI.

either in relation to *created* Power, or in relation to *increated* Power. If in relation to the first, then for God to be able to do all that is possible, will amount to no more, Than that he can do whatever a *Creature* can do. - But if in relation to the second, then for God to be able to do all that is possible, will be the same as to say, that he can do whatever he *can* do. Which would be a very notable discovery. And, besides, according to this measure, a Man might truly say, that God were Omnipotent; tho' at the same time he should deny that he could Create any thing besides the *present* World: Because he could
**Disp.* 30. then do all that is possible, there
Sect. 17. being nothing then but this World
 so denominated from the Divine
 Power, as * *Suarez* rightly infers.

III.

To satisfy therefore this difficulty, we must find out another sense of the word *Possible*, than what is taken from denomination to any *Power*. I consider, therefore, that a thing may be said to be possible *Absolutely* and *Negatively*, from the habitude of the *simple Idea's themselves*, as well as from relation to any *Power* which may so denominate it. My meaning is, That there are some *Idea's* whose habitude is such to one another, that they may admit of Composition: There are others, again, whose habitude is such that they cannot admit of Composition, but stand necessarily divided. The first of these I call Possible, the second I call Impossible. Possible, therefore in this sense, is the same as that which involves no repugnance. And therefore to avoid all Ambiguity

biguity, setting aside the Word *Possible*, I shall chuse rather to express the Omnipotence of God by calling it a Power of doing whatever involves no repugnancy or contradiction.

IV.

Now, that God is thus Omnipotent (not to seek out after other Arguments) I thus demonstrate from the Idea of God. Being it self is the proper, full and adequate Cause of Being, for whatever is, so far as it is, it partakes of Being it self, as was before proved. Now if being it self be the proper, full and adequate cause of Being, then its effects must extend to all those things which are not repugnant to the Nature and *Reason of Being*. For if it did extend only to some certain Ones, then Being it self would not be the proper, full, and adequate cause of *Being*, as is supposed, but only of this or that *particular* Being. And if it extends to all things that are not repugnant to the *Reason of Being*, then it must extend to all but *not being*: For not being only is repugnant to the *Reason of Being*. God, therefore, who is Being it self, can do all, that does not involve in it the Reason of not Being; but these are only contradictions: God therefore can do whatever does not imply a contradiction, and is therefore Omnipotent. Which was the thing to be proved.

The Use of this to Devotion.

FROM the *Omnipotence* of God, we may take occasion to make these Conclusions. *First*, That we ought to revere and fear him above all the things in the World, and endeavour by the

utmost services of a well-ordered life to make him our *Friend*, considering what a fearful thing it is to fall into the Hands of an *Omnipotent Enemy*. *I will forwarn you whom you shall fear*, says our Saviour, *fear him*, Luk. 12. 5. *which after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

Secondly, That when once we have made God our *Friend*, and engaged him on our side, we then fear no *Created Power*, whether *Human* or *Diabolical*. For if an *Omnipotent God* be with us, what need we care who *Psalm. 23. 4.* is against us. We ought rather to say with the *Psalmist*, *tho' I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.*

Lastly, We ought upon Consideration of this great Attribute of God, to repose a firm trust and confidence in all his Promises, tho' never so contrary to the Ordinary *Laws of Nature*, and to the common Measures of *Human Probability*.

Since our concern is with him, Luk. 1. 37. who is the God of Nature, and with whom (as the Angel tells us) nothing shall be impossible.

The Aspiration.

WITH thee, O my God, is *Power and Strength*, and with thee ought to be *Dominion and Fear*. *My flesh trembles for fear of thee: And I am afraid of thy Judgments.* Thou art *Terrible*, O my God, as well as *Lovely*, but thou art also *Cant. 6. 5.* *Lovely in thy very Terror.* Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me; they have overcome me with their *Dread*, as well as with their *Beauty*; For as thou art *Beautiful*, O my Love, as *Tirzah*, *Comely*, as *Jerusalem*; so art thou also *Terrible*, as an *Army with Banners*.

O my Omnipotent Love, with what *safety*, as well as *delight*, do I sit under thy *Shadow*! Thou hast brought me into thy *Banqueting-House*, and thy *Banner* over me, is *Power* as well as *Love*. Thy Love is stronger than *Death*; what need I fear, thy left Hand is under my Head, and thy right Hand does imbrace me; and why then should any dread approach me? *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear? He is the strength of my Life, of whom then shall I be afraid?*

O, my God, why is not my *Faith* like thy *Power*? Thou canst do all things; and why is my *Faith* limited? Let me imitate thee, O my God, in this thy *Infinity*: And grant me such a *Victorious*, such an *Omnipotent Faith*, that as to thee nothing is too hard to do, so to me nothing may be too hard to believe. *Amen.*



CONTEMPLATION VII.

Of the Divine Justice and Veracity.

I.

FROM the Omnipotence of God, I proceed to the Consideration of his *Justice*, this being as necessary a qualification in the Governour of the whole World as the other. Now, by Justice in this place, I understand particular, not Universal Justice. And of particular Justice, not that which is Commutative (for this has no place in God; for, as the Apostle says, *Who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?*) but that which is *Distributive*, and consists in a constant will of dispensing to every Person according to his desert. Rom. II. 35.

II.

This *Justice* of God is the same in the moral World, as *Order* and *Proportion* is in the *Natural*. 'Tis giving to every thing its due place and station, and disposing it according to its Nature and Condition. For as the Beauty of the *Natural* World arises from *Proportion*, so does the Beauty of the *Moral* World arise also from due *Order* and *Proportion*; and as God has strictly observed this Rule in the making

Of the Divine Justice and Veracity. 83

making of the World, having made all things in Number, Weight and Measure, so we may be sure he proceeds by the same Standard in the *Government* and conduct of it, though the exactness of this latter is not so obvious to our observation, as that of the former, nor are we so well able to judge of the *Moral*, as of the *Natural Geometry* of God.

III.

Now that God is thus Just, always acting according to true *Order and Proportion*, may sufficiently be made out from this single Consideration. All Order and Proportion (as every one I suppose will readily grant) is, in it self considered, lovely and desirable. If so, then it cannot be nill'd or refused for it self, or as such. If so, then whenever it is refused, it must be refused for the sake of some other greater good. If so, then this other greater good must be, either the private Interest of the Refuser, or some other Private Interest, or the Publick Interest. But neither of these can here find any admission. It cannot be for the Private Interest of the Refuser, who is here supposed to be a Being absolutely Perfect; and consequently not capable of proposing to himself any self-end. And cannot be for the Publick Interest, for the greatest Interest of the Publick consists in *Order and Proportion*. Neither can this Order be violated for the Interest of any other Private Person, because that is not a greater, but on the contrary, an infinitely less good, Order and Proportion being the good of the Publick, which is always greater than any Private whatsoever. Since therefore Order and Proportion cannot be violated

84 Part I. Contemplation VII.

lated by God for any of these ends, nor for its own sake, it being *as such* lovely and desirable, as was supposed, it follows that Order and Proportion cannot possibly be violated by God at all, and consequently 'tis necessary that God should always effectually *Will Order and Proportion*, which is the same as to be *Just*.

IV.

By this Justice, or Will of following Order and Proportion, God stands engaged not to punish an Innocent Creature, or to afflict him with any evil greater than that good which he has conferred upon him: Within that compass indeed he may, for that is only to deduct from that Happiness, every degree of which was a free favour. But he cannot impose the least grain or scruple of evil upon him beyond the good conferred, without some demerit of the Creature. Much less will this Justice of God permit that he should predetermine an Innocent Creature, without respect to any Crime, merely for his own will and pleasure, to everlasting misery. He that can make this consistent with God's Justice, or any Justice in the World, had need be a very good *Reconciler*.

V.

But now whether God's Justice obliges him to *punish the Sinner*, as well as *not to punish the Innocent*, is a thing that will admit of more question. This has been argued with great Contention between some Schools, and is too disputable to be positively determined. For my part I am more inclined to think that the Nature of God obliges him to punish sin some where or other, and that *vindictive Justice* is *Essential* to him.

VI.

That it is so far Essential to him that he cannot but punish an *impenitent* Sinner; few I believe will question. For nothing in the World can be imagined more against Order and Proportion than that a Sinner should be *pardoned* without *Repentance*. But further; 'tis highly *probable*, that Sin could not have been pardoned even *with* Repentance, had there not also been *Satisfaction* made to God for it. 'Tis plain *de facto*, that God *would not* remit Sin without satisfaction, and that too the highest imaginable: Which makes it very probable that he *could not*. For is it reasonable to think that God would deliver up his only and beloved Son to that *bitter dispensation*, if, with the safety of his Justice, he could have pardoned us, meerly for our *Repentance*, without such a costly *Sacrifice*? And that he could not, does not that Prayer of our Saviour argue, which he used in his Agony? *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*: Which is as much as if he had said, *Father, if the Sin of Man may be remitted any other way than by way of suffering, I desire I may not suffer*. This I think is the Obvious sense of the Words. But this Prayer of his, was not granted by the removal of the Cup, and may I not thence conclude that 'twas impossible it should be removed?

VII.

And I further consider that God necessarily hates sin with an infinite hatred, as a thing that is diametrically opposite to his own Essential sanctity, and to those great Ends which he cannot but propose in the regulation of the Universe. But how he should thus hate it, and yet
not

86 Part I. Contemplation VII.

not shew this his hatred by punishing it, is not easie to conceive. And besides it seems agreeable to the Laws of Order and Proportion, that so great a *Dis-harmony* as *Sin*, should never go wholly unpunished, but that the Publick happiness, of which Sin is a *violation*, should be both repaired and secured by the exaction of some satisfaction.

VIII.

If it be said, that every one may remit as much as he please from his own Right, and that then much more may God. I answer, that Right, is either Right of *Dominion*, or Right of *Office*. From Right of *Dominion*, when alone, no doubt any Person may remit what he pleases, but not from Right of *Office*, or from Right of *Dominion*, when joyned with Right of *Office*. Now there is great reason to believe that the exacting of Punishment for Sin, is not in God a Right of *Dominion* only, but also a Right of *Office*; that is, that God does not punish only as *supreme Lord*, but as a *Judge*; and as a *Judge*, 'tis congruous to suppose that he may be obliged to punish. Obligated, not by any Law or Power superiour to himself, but by the Essential Rectitude of his own Nature and Will: Which by obliging him to regard the Publick Order and Interest, may by consequence oblige him to animadvert upon those who transgress against it.

IX.

And thus far of the Justice of God, whereby he deals uprightly and equally with all his Creatures, and renders to every one his own, according to their Works, good or bad, without any Partiality or Respect of Persons. The next thing

Of the Divine Justice and Veracity. 87

thing I consider in God is his *Veracity*, whereby all his words are conformable to his Mind and Intention, and all his performances conformable to his Words: Whereby he most assuredly makes good all his Covenants, Promises and Threatnings, and cannot possibly deceive his Creatures any more than he himself can be deceived.

X.

That there is this Veracity in God we may be assured from the *All-sufficiency* and *Perfection* of his Being. For all Fraud and Deceit is grounded upon *Indigence* and *Infirmity*. No Man deceives merely for *deceiving sake*, but to serve a turn, to relieve a Necessity. And such a Necessity too as cannot be relieved any other way. For Fraud is not only a Remedy, but the *last* Remedy; Men never betake themselves to *tricks*, but when they can't compass their Ends by *Plain-dealing*. But now none of these things can be incident to God, who being above all *Indigence* and *Infirmity*, must of consequence be as much above all *Falshood* and *Deceit*.

The Use of this to Devotion.

Considering then that God is thus strictly *Just*, *True*, and *Faithful*, 'tis rational hence to conclude, first, how much it concerns us to *Fear* him, and to beware how we render ourselves *Obnoxious* to this his Justice.

Secondly, That we ought always to rest intirely satisfied in the Divine Dispensations, knowing that 'tis impossible but that this Judge of the whole Earth should do *Right*.

And

88 Part I. Contemplation VII.

And lastly, That we ought readily and firmly to believe him in all the Manifestations of his Mind and Will, and particularly that we ought to repose a strong Confidence in his Covenants and Promises, being well assured that he is Faithful who has promised.

The Aspiration.

MY God, My Judge, who art Righteous in all thy ways, and Holy in all thy works; I delight to think of thee, tho' I am too guilty to contemplate thee, in this thy Attribute, without Fear and Trembling. For there is *Judgment* as well as *Mercy* with thee that thou should'st be Fear'd. *O enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be Justified.*

My God, how strangely Impious are they who dare say or think that the way of the Lord is not equal! My God, I am none of those, nor will I ever be of that profane number. I will ever acquiesce in the Equity of thy Dispensations, whether I am able to comprehend it or no. For I know tho' Clouds and Darkness may sometimes be round about thee, yet Righteousness and Judgment are always the Habitation of thy Seat.

I readily and firmly assent, O my God, to all the Declarations thou hast made of thy Mind and Will. I believe all thy Predictions, all thy Promises, and all thy Threatnings, that they shall be *fulfilled all in their Season*. I know that nothing but Truth can proceed from thee who art Truth it self: I know that thou, O God, can'st not deceive us, O grant that we may not deceive our selves. *Amen.* CON-



CONTEMPLATION VII.

Of the Divine Goodness and Philanthropy.

I Shall now close up these my Considerations of God, with a *Meditation* upon the *Divine Goodness*, by which I understand a Propension of doing good to his Creatures by the Communication of his own good or happiness. But here upon my first entrance, I find my self plunged beyond my Depth. It is an immense Ocean which no Line can fathom, and where the Sight loses it self in a long boundless Prospect. This is that Attribute which in a peculiar manner adorns and accomplishes the Divine Nature, and renders it Amiable and Lovely, as well as Venerable and Adorable. This is the highest Repast of Angels, and the peculiar entertainment of Contemplative Souls, many of which who had no other guide to follow but the Clue of their own Reasonings, have long since observed that Goodness is the Principal; and, as I may say, the *Divinest* Attribute of the Deity.

II.

This is the *Gentile* Theology intended by making Love the most ancient of all the Gods. And accordingly we find in the Platonick Trinity (which is $\pi\delta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\nu$, $\nu\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$ and $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) that the first place is assigned to the $\pi\delta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\nu$, which they conceive

90 Part I. Contemplation VIII.

conceive after the manner of an immense and most pure Light, continually diffusing and Communicating its invigorative Beams. And this was that which the fine Platonist *Boetius* alluded to, in that celebrated and graphical description of God, when he called him *Fons Boni Lucidus*, the *Lucid Fountain of Good*. And there is an ancient *Cabalistical Table* supposed to be borrowed from the *Pythagoreans*, which represents in a visible Scheme the Order of the Divine Perfection, wherein 'tis observable that Goodness is seated in the Supreme Circle, which they call *Cheether* or the *Crown*, thereby intimating that Goodness presides over, and gives Laws and Measures to all the other Attributes of God.

III.

And indeed it does so: For thus God's Power serves to execute the Dictates of his Wisdom, and his Wisdom is employed in finding out Objects, Methods and Occasions, for the exercise of his Goodness. Nay, even Justice it self, which at first seems to thwart and reprimand the Inclinations of Goodness, will notwithstanding be found upon nearer inspection, sweetly to conspire and accord with it, nay (what seems a greater Paradox) to be one of the Instances and Exemplifications of it. For God never punishes but when Order, that is, the good of the Universe requires it, and consequently never but when upon the whole 'tis best to do so. So that God's goodness will still be the *Cheether*, the *Crown* of all his Perfections.

IV.

IV.

Plato calls God *ἰδέα τῆς ἀγαθῆς*, the *Idea or Essence of Goodness*. A very high expression. But says not the Scripture also the same? For when it defines God, it does not say he is Wisdom or Power, but that he is *Love*. Not *Loving*, but *Love* it self. And our Saviour in Answer to him that call'd him good Master, tells us, There is none good but *One*, that is *God*. As if this Divinest Attribute were *that Honour*, of which God is said by Isa. 42. 8. the Prophet to be so Jealous, that he will not give it to another; not to any of the Sons of Men, no not to the Son of Man.

V.

And indeed God may well be Jealous of this his *Honour*, since Goodness is that Attribute which does not only render the Deity most lovely to us, but is also most peculiarly beloved by Himself. 'Tis his Favourite and darling Excellence, that which he seems most of all to delight in, and to value as the very Flower and Beauty of all his Excellence. And therefore when *Moses* desired to have a sight of his Glory, his Answer to him was, *I will make my goodness pass before thee*.

VI.

And how much God is in Love with this his Attribute, we may conclude from the great use and exercise of it. God has exercised his Goodness more than all the rest of his Attributes, so that the Stream rises almost as high as the Fountain, and the Instances and Exemplifications of it are almost as infinite as it self. The *Material* Fabrick of the World is the Emanation of the Divine goodness, and who can tell how

92 Part I. Contemplation VIII.

how large that is, or where the utmost boundaries of it are fixed? Then as for the *Intellectual* part of the Creation, how fruitful has the Divine Goodness been, and what a Numerous Progeny has it brought forth! Who can
 Dan. 7. 10. Number the Lord's Host? *Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.* All these drink of the same inexhaustible *Well of Life*, of this *Lucid fountain of good*; and with perpetual Anthems of Praise celebrate the bounty of their Maker.

VII.

But altho' those higher Orders of Spirits, who are seated near the Spring-head of Bliss, enjoy a greater share of the Divine Goodness, and being as it were in a *direct Position* to that All-glorious Sun, must needs drink in more plentiful and more vigorous Effusions of his Light; yet Man, the Younger Brother, seems in some respects to be the Darling of Heaven, and to be Priviledg'd with some peculiär Tokens of Favour. I shall chuse to instance in two. One is, That Man is admitted to the *Grace of Repentance*, and has the advantage of *Second thoughts*, whereas *God spared not*
 2 Pet. 2. 4. *the Angels that sinn'd.* The other is, That Man had the Honour to be Hypostatically United with the *αὐτός*, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. So that what was figuratively spoken by God in the Case of *Adam*, is here in some measure
 Heb. 2. 16. really verify'd, *Behold Man is become as one of us*; whereas he *refused to take upon him the Nature of Angels.*

VIII.

These indeed are the two greater Lights that shine most conspicuously in the Firmament, and such as when alone consider'd, would wind up a contemplative Spirit to that Extatick Admiration of the Psalmist, *Lord, what is Man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him!* But there are also a multitude of lesser Stars, many of which we do not observe, tho' we feel and thrive under their Influence; and those which we do we cannot number. God's Favours are too quick for our Accounts, and the Heavenly Manna falls so thick about our Tents, that we want opportunity to gather it up.

IX.

But that I may Sail by some Compass in so wide and boundless an Ocean, I consider that the Effects of God's Goodness to Man may be distributed into these two Kinds in general, *Giving and Forgiving*. Those of giving again are of two sorts: Either such as are to be conferr'd upon us after our Work is done, by which I understand the Rewards of Heaven; or such as are given us by way of Earnest, or Anticipation.

X.

I begin with the last of these, where the first thing that offers it self to our consideration is the *Collation of our Being*; which I do not understand as 'tis generally taken in the Schools, namely, For naked and abstract Existence: For thus to *Be Absolutely* has no manner of intrinsic good in it, but is only a Foundation or Capacity of a good or evil State Indifferently. And this methinks is so very plain, that I should

94 Part I. Contemplation VIII.

should much wonder how so many Metaphysical Heads could espouse the contrary, were it not found to be a convenient Device for the Maintenance of that absurd Paradox, *that 'tis better to Be, tho' in extream Misery, than not to be*; which Proposition was also intended for the support of another, every whit as absurd, *viz.* That God may consistently with his Goodness and Justice, inflict eternal Misery upon an Innocent Creature. For since he may (as all grant) Annihilate an Innocent Creature, 'twill follow that he may with less appearance of Injustice, inflict on him eternal Misery, Annihilation (according to these mens Metaphysicks) being the greater evil of the two. And that for this notable Reason, because he that *is*, tho' never so miserable, enjoys some good, *viz.* that of Existence, whereas he that is not, has none at all.

XI.

But now, besides that the good of Simple being, may be outweighed by Super-induced evils, and that then to *Be*, all considered, would not be good but evil, as I could easily shew were it my present concern further to ingage in that Controversie; I say, besides this, I do not allow the Truth of the first Assertion, that to be has any intrinsic good in it. And therefore when I begin the Catalogue of the Divine Favours, with the Collation of our Being, I do not understand by the Phrase meerly our being brought into Act indefinitely (existence as such including neither good nor evil in it) but our being made such certain Essences or Natures, consisting of such Powers and Faculties as are requisite to constitute such an Order of Beings as according

to such a Mode of Imitability or Idea, is represented in the Divine Understanding, and which we distinguish by the Name of Mankind.

XII.

Now the Nature of Man involves much good and Perfection in it, and consequently for God to give it Existence is an Act of *Goodness* as well as of *Power*. For tho' there be (as I suppose) little or no deference to be paid to that popular Argument, which would derive an Obligation of gratitude upon Children toward their Parents, from their receiving their Being from them, because there is no kindness here designed to those Persons who in the *Event* (perhaps) are *profited*, but before were not so much as *known*; yet our case is quite otherwise, as to our receiving our Being from the Father of Spirits. For he both knew whom he was to oblige, when he gave us Being, and *intended* it as a kindness to us, having no Interest of his own to promote by it. Which are the two Qualifications required by *Seneca*, in his Book *De Beneficiis*, to make up the Nature of such a Benefit as shall lay an Obligation upon the Receiver.

XIII.

Now both these Requisites being eminently found in God, it follows that his Kindness in giving us Being, receives its Estimate from the value and excellency of the thing bestowed, which cannot appear little if we consider, that such was the Dignity and Excellency of Human Nature, that it occasioned *deliberation* in Heaven, and was thought worthy of the *Council* of the *Trinity*. If we consider, that Man is the most Noble part of all the visible Creation, the Abstract and Compendium of the Universe.
That

96 *Part I. Contemplation VIII.*

That he is a Creature formed after the Image of the Great God, endowed with an excellent and immortal Spirit, and resembling his Maker, as in other respects, so in some measure in this, that he can and must needs be happy both in the *direct* Operations of his Nature, and in the *reflective* acts of Contemplation upon the dignity of his Essence. To give therefore Being to such an accomplished Creature as this, is *ipso facto*, without Consideration of any further design, a very signal act of Love and Beneficence.

XIV.

Another very signal Instance of the Divine Goodness to Man, is our *Preservation*, whether we consider it in the more Metaphysical way of the Schools, as that uninterrupted Influx, which they call Continued Creation, whereon we depend as Essentially as the Image in the Glass does upon the Object; or whether we consider it after the more popular acceptation, as it denotes the Conduct and Superintendency of God's Providence, whereby he so disposes of the Events and Issues of things, as either to keep off from us what would incommode our welfare, or to work out a more important good from those evils which he suffers to befall us.

XV.

And here would be matter of wonderful curiosity, and pleasing astonishment, could we but discern from end to end those manifold turns and fetches, those Stratagems and Intrigues, that *Plot* of Providence which is engaged for our preservation through the various Occurrences of Life. Could we but see what a Labyrinth, what a Maze we tread, and what reason there is for every turning; were but our Eyes
open'd

open'd (as the Young Man's were at the Prayer of *Elisha*) to see the Bright Host of Auxiliary Spirits that incamp 2 King. 6. about us, to see with what care 17. and concern the good Angels contest on our behalf against the Powers of Darkness, as the Guardian Angel of the Jews did against the Prince of *Per-* Dan. 10. *sia*, and how many dangers both Ghostly and bodily we escape through their Protection, could we I say see all this-----But we may be content to *want* the *curiosity*, so long as we *enjoy* the *Benefit*, and rest satisfied with what the Psalmist assures us of in general, that *the Angel of the Lord* Psal. 34. *tarrieth about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

XVI.

Another considerable instance of the Divine Goodness to Man, is seen in the Provision made by Providence for the necessities and conveniences of Life, such as Food and Raiment, and the like. This was first exemplified in the Order of the *Creation*, wherein 'tis to be observed that the Creation of Man was reserved for the work of the *Sixth-day*, till the World was both *Created* and *Furnished* for his reception; till the Heavenly bodies were prepared to guide him by their *Light*, and the Earth to feed him with her *Fruits*, and then God brings Man into the World, like a Noble Guest to a Table richly spread and set out with Delicacies.

XVII.

I dare not heighten this consideration so far as some do, who affirm all things to have been
E made

98 Part I. Contemplation VIII.

made meerly for the use of Man. For although (as 'tis well noted by the *French Princip.* Philosopher) upon a moral account, *Phil. p. 50.* it be of good use to say that God made all things for our sakes, it being a consideration that would serve to excite in us a greater Love and Gratitude towards him, and although in some corrected Sense it be true, in as much as we may make use of all things to some good purpose or other, eithet as *Objects* to employ our *Philosophy* upon, or as *Occasions* to *Magnifie* the Goodness and Power of our Creator, yet to say that all things were so precisely made for us as to exclude all other purposes, besides that 'tis too boldly to determin concerning the Ends of God, and to indulge a fond opinion of our selves, 'tis also plainly absurd and unphilosophical, there being questionless many things in the World so far from affording any real use to Man, that they never have been or shall be so much as seen or understood by him.

XVIII.

However thus far we may venture to determin, and more we need not require, that God had a special regard to Man in the Creation of the World, whom he has constituted Lord of the inferiour part of it, that (as the Psalmist says) *he covered the Heavens with* Psal. 147. *Clouds, and prepared Rain for the Earth, and made the Grass to grow upon the Mountains, and Herbs for the use of Man.*

XIX.

But besides this *General* and *Primary* designation of things for the use of Man, there is a more

more *Particular* and *Secondary* work of Providence to be observ'd in the so managing and Ordering of Affairs, that every Man may have a tolerable Portion of the good things of this Life. And this is effected not by leaving all things in *Common*, or giving every Man a right to every thing, for this would be of pernicious consequence, as tending both to the perpetual *disturbance* of the *Publick Peace*, and to the *utter neglect* and *Disimprovement* of *Nature*; but by the limits and inclosures of *Property*, whereby care is taken that every Man shall either have something of his own, or be maintain'd by the Provisions of those that have. So that some way or other God provides for every member of this his great Family; and though he does not always at our desire bring Quails, and fill us with the Bread of Heaven, yet he furnishes every one that travels in this Wilderness with a *Viaticum* sufficient to carry him thro' his Journey; and tho' he does not grant him his *own* wish, yet he grants him that of a *Wiser Man*, and feeds him with food *convenient for him*. Psal. 105. Prov. 35.

XX.

But these are but Prefatory Favours, Dawnings of Goodness, and little Essays of the Divine Love if Compared with those last displays of his Bounty, those Consummations of Kindness which attend Man in the other World, when God shall give him everlasting felicity, and make him glad with the joy of his Countenance. When he shall withdraw his Hand from the Clift of the Rock, and shew him all his Glory. Psal. 21. Exod. 33.

100 Part I. Contemplation VIII.

When he shall remove the Bounds from the Mount of his Presence, and admit him to the *Comprehensions* of an Intuitive Beatitude. This is that great Portion, that Final Patrimony which is laid up for Man, and which (as our Saviour says) shall be given, to those, *for whom it is prepared.* To those, who do not by their own default forfeit their Inheritance with the Saints in Light.

XXI.

And thus far of those effects of the Divine Goodness to Man, which are manifested by giving. The next is that of *forgiving.* This is that peculiar Instance of Favour, whereby Man stands distinguish'd from the rest of the Sons of God, as the great Favorite of Heaven. For though the Angels were all Partakers of God's Love and Bounty, yet 'twas Man alone that was made choice of to be the

De Nat. Object of his Mercy. Μόνον ὁ ὁ
Hom. p. 22. ἄνθρωπος τῶν λογικῶν ἐξαίρετον ἔχει
τὸ συγγνώμης ἐν τῷ μετάνοεῖν ἀξιῶν.

Says Nemefius. For 'twas Man alone, among all Rational Beings, who had the Priviledge of being pardon'd by Repentance. A Favour extraordinary, whether we consider the great Benefit that accrues to Man by it, in being freed from the Curse of the Law, and restored to a Capacity of arriving to that Happiness, for which he was first designed, or the wonderful means of effecting it. For that God should bow the Heavens and come down, empty himself by taking upon him the Form of a Servant, and humble himself yet further, by becoming Obedient even unto Death, this is that Stupendious unutterable

unutterable instance of Mercy, that Mystery of Goodness, which the Angels desire to look into, which they admire and cannot Comprehend, sound and cannot Fathom, and which while *they Contemplate, Man enjoys.*

The Use of this to Devotion.

HAVING now *tasted and seen* in some Measure how good and gracious the Lord is, let us now apply this speculation to the advantage of Devotion. This I shall do, First, by considering what may be collected to this purpose from the Goodness of God in General; Secondly, by the shewing how the several Instances of the Divine Goodness point out to us the exercise of several Devotional vertues. And first, since God is so good a Being, and so good to Man, 'twill become us in the first place to banish all superstitious slavish Fears and jealous apprehensions of him, considering that 'tis more for the Honour, and more according to the Will of so Good a Being, to be heartily loved, than servilely feared, and that 'tis Love and not Fear that has the Honour to fulfil the whole Law.

Secondly, God being so good, and having shewn so much Goodness to us, 'twill highly become us in the next place to acknowledge this his Goodness by all the ways we can, especially by these Three, *Praying to him, Depending on him, and Praising him.* By every one of these we acknowledge God's Goodness, either directly, or by consequence; but most of all by the last, which ought therefore to be principally regarded. This I the rather take notice of, because 'tis a thing wherein we are generally

E 3 defective,

defective, for we are all apt to be more zealously affected in our *petitionary Prayers*, than in our *giving Thanks*. And the Reason, I suppose, is, because our *Prayers* are for *our selves*, but *giving Thanks* is to *God*. But certainly this is a great fault, and proceeds from that root of all evil, *self-love*; we ought rather to address our selves to God with more Application and Devotion in our *Praises* than in our *Prayers*. For he that *Praises*, glorifies God more than he that *Prays*; for he that *Prays*, does only hope that *God will* be good to him, but he that *Praises*, does *actually* acknowledge that he is already so. There is more excellence in *Praise* than we are commonly aware of. To *Believe, Pray* and *Trust* is the work of Earth, but to *Adore* and *Praise* is the work of Heaven. But not so as to be reserved till we come thither. No, we must begin it here, or we shall never do it hereafter. 'Tis the only retribution God expects from us for all his Goodness, to be blessed for his Blessings; and unless we do this, we shall be guilty of the highest injustice and ingratitude imaginable, and of such a vileness, as all the *Praying* in the World will never counter-vail.

But as we are obliged to act thus from God's Goodness in general, so the several Instances of the Divine Goodness point out to us the exercise of several Devotional Vertues. For example, when a Man considers God as the Author and Preserver of his Being, what inference can be more natural, than that he should present unto him himself, his Soul and Body to be a *reasonable, holy and lively Sacrifice*, that he should employ all his Powers and Faculties, in the Service,

Service, and to the Glory of him that gave them, and love him with all his Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength? Again, when he considers the guard which God's Holy Angels keep over him, and the many Deliverances vouchsafed him through their Protection, What inference can be more obvious than that he rest secure under this defence of the most High, and abide with confidence under the shadow of the Almighty, that he sing Praises to God in the multitude of these his *strong* Mercies, and be ever mindful of that saying, *Grieve not the Angel, lest he smite thee: Do nothing against him, lest he forsake thee.* Again, when he considers the plentiful provision God has made for him as to this Life, that his Lot is fallen to him in a fair ground, and that he has a goodly Heritage, what is more naturally to be inferred than that he offer up to God the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, for all the Methods, Conveyances and Instruments of his Bounty, and that he trust his Providential care for his future maintenance? Again, when he considers that weight of Glory prepared for him in the other World, what can be more natural for him, than with Angels and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven, to Laud and Magnifie his Glorious Name, and to press forward to some degrees of *excellency*, in the Service of him who has thus prevented him with such excesses of Kindness, such depths of unsearchable Love? *Lastly*, when he considers those astonishing Miracles of the Divine Mercy and Condescension in the Redemption of the World, in the Assumption of our Nature, and the humble submission of our Blessed Lord to the Pains and Dishonours

of the Cross, what can be more natural, than that after an Hymn of Praise and Adoration to him that sitteth on the Throne, and 1 Cor. 6. to the Lamb, he look upon himself now as no longer his own, but as bought with a Price; and accordingly glorifie God in his Body and Spirit, which are God's, that he dishonour not that Nature which is made one with the Divinity, and advanced above the Seraphims; and that lastly, he endeavour to copy out some of the imitable strokes of his Saviour's Humility, and (in the Apostle's Phrase) *let the same mind be in him which was in Christ Jesus.*

The Aspiration.

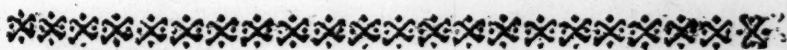
O *My great and good God*, who art good in all thy Greatness, and whose chiefest greatness is to be Good; How can I possibly think amiss of thee, distrust thee, or harbour any jealous apprehensions concerning thee? And how unworthy should I be of this thy Goodness if I should!

But, O God, my Love, 'tis my infirmity to be *afraid* of that Excellence which I should rather *love*, for my love of thee is not yet perfect enough to cast out all fear; but blessed be thy Goodness, who in the midst of my fears and doubtful surmises art pleased to remind me of thy Nature, and to say to my Soul, as thou didst once to the diffident Disciples, *It is I, be not afraid.*

The Voice of my Beloved! I will therefore turn my fears to love, and love more than I
 ever

ever yet feared or loved. I will also magnifie thee, O God, my King: And I will praise thy Name for ever and ever. Psal. 145. Every day will I give thanks unto thee: And praise thy Name for ever and ever. For I have tasted and seen how gracious thou art, and I find it is a good thing to Praise thee: And that 'tis a joyful and pleasant thing to be Thankful. I know, O my God, that thy Goodness is as much above my Praise as thy Greatness is above my Comprehension. My Praises can add nothing to thee, neither can I Praise thee according to thy Goodness. But, O my God, I will Praise thee according to my strength, and I know that the same Goodness of thine, which is too great to be praised worthily, is also too great not to accept our unworthy Praises.

My God, I know thou requirest from me only the Praises of a Man, but I am troubled that I cannot Praise thee as an Angel. O that I were now in Heaven, if 'twere only that I might Praise thee as thy Angels Praise thee: This, O my God, I will do hereafter; my Gratitude shall run then as high as theirs; and it shall be as lasting too; it shall last as long as thy Goodness and my Being lasts; and as thy mercy, so my Praise shall endure for ever.



23 OC 62



T H E
SECOND PART.

Wherein the
Grounds and Measures
O F
DEVOTION
Are Consider'd from the
Nature of MAN.







CONTEMPLATION I.

Of Man, consider'd as a Creature.

I.



IN Man, as thus consider'd, I find these four things involv'd, First, That he was once nothing. Secondly, That from nothing he became Something. Thirdly, That he was made Something, and is what he is by and from God. Fourthly, That he so depends upon God's continual Influence for the continuation of that Being which he receiv'd from him, that should God but never so little withdraw it, he must necessarily fall back into his first Nothing.

II.

First, then I consider that Man was once Nothing, which is the same as to say, That once he was not, or that he was not always. This is too acknowledg'd a Proposition to need any *laborious* Proof; but however for satisfaction sake, I thus demonstrate it. If Man were always, he would be a necessary Being. For since every thing is necessary while it is; and since there is no assignable point of Duration wherein that which always is, is not, it follows, that if Man were always, he would be a necessary Being. But now that Man is not a necessary Being I prove thus:

III. Man

III.

Man has not his Being from himself, but from some other Being ; For if he had it from himself, he would never have limited his own Being, and consequently would have had all other Perfections as well as Existence. But that he has not is plain, because he is an *Amorous* and *Desiring* Being, and is continually reaching out and aspiring to some further Excellence, which is a certain Argument of *Indigency*. Whence it follows, that he had not Being from himself.

IV.

He must therefore have it from some other Being, that is, He must therefore exist, because some other Being will have him to exist. If then the Ground and Reason of Man's existing be the Will and Pleasure of some other Being, then Man must so far exist necessarily, as 'tis necessary that that other Being should will his existence. Since the necessity of the Effects depends upon the necessity of the Cause : To shew therefore that Man does not necessarily exist, 'twill be enough to shew that 'tis not necessary that any such Being should will his Existence ; which I do thus :

V.

'Tis not necessary that any Being should effectually will that which is not necessarily Lovely. But Man is not necessarily Lovely ; therefore 'tis not necessary that any Being should effectually will the Being of Man. The first Proposition is Self-evident. The second will be made so, by considering that necessary Loveliness is the highest degree of Loveliness, and the highest degree of Loveliness, supposes the highest degree of Excellence ; that which is lovely in the

Of Man, consider'd as a Creature. 111

the highest degree, must be *excellent* in the highest degree, every thing being lovely so far as it is excellent. But now Man is not Excellent in the highest degree, because he aspires to higher excellence (as was said before) and therefore neither is he Lovely in the highest degree, and therefore not Necessarily Lovely. Which was the Minor Proposition. The Conclusion therefore follows, that 'tis not necessary that any Being should effectually will the being of Man. And therefore also 'tis not necessary that Man should exist, the reason of Man's existing being founded upon the will of some other Being, as was supposed. And if Man does not exist *necessarily*, then he did not exist *always*; and if not *always*, then once he was not, which was the thing to be here made out.

VI.

The next thing to be consider'd is that Man became Something from Nothing: Which is the same as to say that he was not made out of any Pre-existent Matter or Substance. This, tho' it be more strictly verifi'd of the *Soul* of Man, which in no sense was raised into being from any pre-existent substance, but came immediately from Nothing to be what it is, yet it is also verifi'd to all intents and purposes in respect of his *Body*, which tho' it be not *immediately* from Nothing as the Soul is, yet *Mediately* it is, it being form'd not from Matter eternally Pre-existing, but from Matter which once was nothing, it being impossible that there should be any eternally pre-existing Matter, or that Matter should always have been, for the very same Reason that Man could not have

112 *Part II. Contemplation I.*

have been always; which having already set down, I shall not again repeat it.

VII.

The third thing involv'd in Man's being a Creature, is that he was made something, and is what he is by and from God. This will be thus Demonstrated. All being is either Being *Essentially*, that is, Being it self, or Being by *Participation*. Now Being it self is God, as has been shewn before: And there can be but one Being it self, as was also shewn before. Therefore all Beings besides this one Being it self, besides God, are Beings by *Participation*. Now whatever is in any thing by Participation, is caused in it by that to which it essentially belongs. Man therefore being a Being by Participation, must necessarily be from and by Being it self; that is, from and by God.

VIII.

Should it be here Objected that Nothing hinders, but that a thing may be found without that which is not of the Reason or Essence of it, as a Man suppose without Learning. And that this Habitude of being caused by Being it self, or God, is not of the essence of Beings, because they may be conceiv'd without it. And that therefore nothing hinders but that there may be some Beings that are not from God. To this I answer, That tho' this Habitude does not make any part of the Idea or Essence of those things which are caused, yet it is necessarily consequent to it. For to be a Being by Participation does as much virtually involve its being caused, as a Triangle involves this Affection; that any two sides of it taken together are greater than the third. So that such a Being can no
more

Of Man, consider'd as a Creature. 113

more exist without being *caused*, than a Triangle can exist without this Affection. But whereas the Habitude of being caused, is not of the Reason of *Being Simply, or as such*, therefore there is a *Certain* being that is not caused, which is God.

IX.

The same Conclusion, that Man has his Being from God, may be further proved from this Consideration, that none can possibly Create but God. The truth of which Proposition is generally founded upon the Distance that is between Being and not Being, which they say is infinite, and therefore it must require an Infinite Power to reduce a thing from one to the other. But this is an obscure way of arguing; and I must profess that I do not so clearly understand it as to be satisfy'd whether it be conclusive or no; and therefore I shall rather chuse to say, that the most universal effect must have the most universal cause. But now among all Effects, to make a thing to *be Simply* is the most Universal. And this is *Creation*, which implies not only a production of this or that Being, or of a Being according to this or that Nature or Quality, (for this is also done in *Generation* and *Alteration*), but also of Being Absolutely: For the immediate Terms of Creation are from *not being to be*, and then afterwards comes in to be *this or that, thus or thus*. Creation therefore is the most Universal Effect that is, and consequently it must be reduced into the most Universal Cause that is, which is God. Therefore God only can Create; therefore all Creatures are from God, and consequently Man receives his Being from no other but God.

X.

'Tis now further to be consider'd, that as Man receives his being from God, so he depends upon God's continual influence for the continuation of it, insomuch, that should God never so little withdraw it, he must necessarily fall back into his First Nothing. For besides, that to continue in being is as much an *Universal Effect* as to make to be, and consequently must be resolv'd into the same Universal Cause, which is God. I further consider, that Being by Participation is wholly and intirely from Being it self. Now every Effect depends upon its Cause as far as it is its Cause. If a Partial Cause, then it depends upon it Partially ; if an Intire Cause, then it depends upon it Intirely. Since therefore Being by Participation is wholly and intirely from Being it self, it follows that it must depend wholly and intirely upon it, and if so, then it must depend upon it for every minute of its Existence, as well as for the very first Instant of it ; otherwise it would not depend upon it wholly and intirely (as is supposed) there being something in reference to which it would be Independent.

XI.

I further consider with *Cartesius*, that since the Time of our Life consists of innumerable Parts, every one of which does by no means depend upon that which went before, from our existing a little before, it does no way follow that we shall exist now. I say, it does no way follow, that because we existed a little before, we shall therefore exist now ; or that because of our existing now,

we

we shall exist afterwards, there being no necessary Connexion between the Moments themselves, whereof our Duration is made up. If therefore we do exist in several Instants or *Nows* of Time, this must be from some Cause which conserves us, and as it were gives us being in every one of those *Nows* or *Moments*. But this cannot be our selves, first, for the reason alledg'd by *Cartesius*, because we are not *Conscious* of any such Power, which undoubtedly we should be, if we had it. And Secondly, because we might then have given our selves the *First Now* or Moment of existence as well as any of the *Rest*. For the first *Now* of Existence differs no otherwise from any of the rest but only as to *Novitas Essendi*, or the *Newness* of existing, which is only an extrinsical Relation, and such as adds nothing to the difficulty or greatness of the Effect; which being the same on both hands, the Cause must also be of equal Force and Vertue. But we could not give Being to our selves (as was before proved) and therefore neither are we able to Conserve our selves in Being. The Cause therefore by which we are conserv'd in being, must be the same which gave us Being, that is, God; without whose continued Influence we can no more go on in our Existence, than we could at *First Be*.

XII.

This I cannot better illustrate than by that dependence which an Image in the Glass has upon the Face whose Reflection it is. The Image is not only caused by the access of the Face to the Glass, but does also so necessarily and substantially depend upon and subsist by its Presence, that at the first removal of it, it immediately

116 Part II. Contemplation I.

mediately vanishes and disappears. And so 'tis with us, we are not only at first brought into being by God, but do also all along so depend upon his Influence for the carrying on our being thro' the several Distinct Moments of time, that should this Influence but never so little be withdrawn or intercepted, we should immediately sink down into our *first nothing*.

XIII.

And were it not thus, 'twould be impossible that God should ever *Annihilate*. For Annihilation cannot be done by any *Positive Act*, because the Term of Annihilation is, *not being Simply*. But now every Positive Act tends to *being*. So that even Physical Corruption is not a Positive Motion, but only in as much as at the Exclusion of one Form another is introduced by way of *Concomitancy*. Much less therefore can Annihilation be Positive. If therefore God be able to Annihilate, it can be only by *Privation*, that is, by suspending that Influence upon which we depended for every Moment of our Existence; and without which we cannot exist. And thus *Job* expresses the Mode of Annihilation, when he says, *O that it would please Job. 6. God to destroy me, that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off.*

XIV

As for the *Particular Mode* of our dependence upon God, and what this Divine Influence is whereby we are Conserv'd in being, this is a Theory much above our Capacity to Comprehend, and therefore I shall not much employ my Curiosity about it. But might I have leave to *Divine*, I would say, That the Creature depends upon God after some such way as the

Of Man, consider'd as a Creature. 117

the Image in the Glass does upon the Face. That this *Ectypal* World is only the Image or Reflexion of the *Archetypal* or *Ideal* World, and so depends upon it, and subsists by it, as all other Images do upon their Originals. And that the *Presentialness* of this *Ideal World* must be supposed to be some way or other *intercepted* in order to the *Annihilation* of either this whole *Ectypal World*, or of any particular Creature in it. And this seems to have good foundation in Scripture, which says, that all things are upheld, or born by the *Word* of God's Power, that is, by the Divine λόγος, the *Ideal* or *Archetypal World*; by whom also in the same place, the Heb. 1. Worlds are said to have been *made*.

The Use of this to Devotion.

Great is the advantage that may be made hence, to the purposes of Devotion. For, *first*, if Man was once nothing, this lays a very proper and reasonable ground for *Humility* and *Poverty of Spirit*. 'Tis usually thought a very *humbling* consideration, to remind a Person of the meanness of his *Original*. But, now, what *Original* can be so mean as to come from *nothing*? Now this is the condition of Man. He had his Rise from *nothing*, and derives his Pedegree by his *Mothers side*, from *Darkness* and *Emptiness*. And tho' now by the Omnipotence of his Creator he is something, yet still he holds his being as precariously as he *first receiv'd* it, and depends as much for his existence upon the Will of his Creator, as Light does upon the Sun. God spake the word, indeed, before

before he was *made*; but to *unmake* him, he need only be *silent*, and not sustain him by the *Word of his Power*. And shall that Being be *Proud* which was once *nothing*, and needs only a *meer Negative* to bring him to nothing again? No, says the wise Man. *Pride was not made for man: Nor furious Anger for them that are born of a woman.*

Secondly, As this affords us grounds of Humiliation, as to our selves, so we have hence Reason to adore and magnifie that *Power* which was so great as to be *able*, and that *Goodness* which was so great as to be *willing* to bring us from nothing to something.

And since all this proceeds wholly from God, to whom we not only owe our beings, but our whole perseverance in being; hence in the last place appears the great equity of giving up our whole selves, our Soul, Body and Spirit, to the Service and Glory of that God in whom we live, move, and have our being; which considering the great Benefit of Creation, and the Right which God thereby acquires over us, must needs be a very *reasonable Service and Sacrifice*.

The Aspiration.

M*Y* God, my Creator, how can I be ever sufficiently *humble*, when I consider that I once was not; when I consider that even thou with all thy Omnipotence can'st not reduce me to a lower degree of nothing than that from whence thou took'st me! When I consider that I still so depend upon thee, that I cannot subsist one moment without thee! What a *vanity*,
what

Of Man, consider'd as a Creature. 119

what a *shadow*, what a *nothing* then am I, who once was not, and now am only because Thou art, and can no longer stand in being than supported by the Arm of thy Power !

O my God, I know not whether of the two I ought more to Adore and Magnifie, either that *Power* that could raise me from nothing, to be what I am, or that *Goodness* which could determine that Power to so strange and wonderful a Production. *One deep*, O my God, *calletb upon another*, and my thoughts are all lost and swallow'd up in *both*.

Praise and Adoration be to thee, O my great and good God, for 'twas from thy Power and Goodness that I receiv'd my Being. *Thou art he that took me out of my Mothers Womb, and thou also wast my Hope when I hang'd yet upon my Mothers Breast. I have been also left unto thee ever since I was born : Thou art my God even from my Mothers Womb. My Soul still hangeth upon thee : Thy right Hand does uphold me. Thou holdest my Soul in life, and sufferest not my Feet to slip.*

To thee then, O *Father of Spirits*, I give up and devote my whole self, for I am intirely from thee, intirely by thee, and therefore intirely thine. How then can I ever offend thee, or rebel against thee, with those Powers which thou hast given me, and dost still uphold and maintain in me ! My God, I will not, but as thou art he whose I am, so thou shalt be he whom I will ever serve. Free me therefore, O God, from my Passions, and make me but once *my Own*, and I will then ever be *Thine*. Amen.



CONTEMPLATION II.

Of Man, consider'd as an Intelligent Creature.

I.

IN the Creation of Man there are two things chiefly to be remarked. *First*, The *Council and Deliberation* of the Blessed Trinity, expressed in these words: *Let us make man.* *Secondly*, The *immediate Pattern* or Platform, according to which he was to be made, expressed in these words, *In our Image, after our own likeness.* Now both these denote the peculiar excellency of human Nature; but especially the latter: For what can make more for the excellency of Man's composition, than to say, that he was made after the *Divine Likeness*.

II.

This Divine likeness, not to mention any other instances of resemblance, I take to be most conspicuous in this, that as in the Divine Nature there are two Processions; one by way of *Intellect*, which is the λόγος, or Word, and the other by way of *Love*, which is the Holy Spirit. So likewise in the human Nature there are as it were two Processions, and that of the same kind too as in the Divine *Understanding* and *Love*. By these two Noble and Divine Powers branching forth from the Soul, Man chiefly resembles

God,

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 121

God, and becomes a little Image of the Trinity.

III.

My business at present is only with the first of these, namely, the *Understanding* of Man, or to consider Man as an *Intelligent Creature*. Here therefore I shall shew, *first*, the *Kinds* of human Knowledge; *Secondly*, the *Mode* of it. Now, as to the *Kinds* of human Knowledge, I consider, that since Knowledge in general (as was before noted) is a *Contemp. 5. Comprehension of Truth*, as many ways as a Man may comprehend Truth, so many ways he may be said to know. Now a Man may comprehend Truth, either as to *Simple Essences*, or as to their *Complex Habitudes*, or as to the *Dependence* that is between one Habitude and another. The first of these is what we usually call Apprehension; the second is what we call Judgment, and the last is what we call Discourse. Thus we are authorized to speak by the Schools, who ascribe Judgment and Discourse to the Understanding; tho' I am rather, of Monsieur Malebranche his mind, that there is no other Operation of the *Intellect* but only *Perception*. *De inquisition, and that Judgment and Discourse more properly belong to the Will*, as being an embracing of, and an adhesion to Truth. But then, withal, it must be acknowledged, that there is a threefold Perception. One whereby I perceive a simple Object, without any relation, which may be call'd a simple Perception. Another, when I perceive the relations of simple Essences, which may be called a Judicial Perception. And a third, when I perceive the relation that

F

is

is between those relations, which may be called a Rational Perception. This is the whole Latitude, and full Compass of the Intellect, and that which belongs to Intellect in common, whether Human or Divine.

IV.

For I think it no absurdity to say, that in this sense God has *Reason* and *Discourse*. For 'tis most certain that he does not only perceive the simple Essences of things, and their relations, but also the relation that is between those relations. Only there is this difference, that God perceives all this at once, with one intire simple view; whereas Man is fain to *open his Prospect* by degrees, by advancing step by step from one proposition to another in the *field* of Truth. Which, tho' it has appropriated to itself the name of *Reason*, yet I think it does not belong to the *nature* of Reason in general, but is rather an *accidental defect* of it, such as proceeds from the *narrowness* of created, or of such or *such* created Capacities. This must not therefore be made necessary to *Reason* (that being sufficiently salv'd in perceiving the relation that is between the Habitues of things) but only to *Human Reason*.

V.

And thus much as to the *Kinds* of human Knowledge. I come now to explain the *Mode* of it, by shewing how Man understands. This perhaps will appear a desperate undertaking at first sight; but I think the difficulty proceeds more from the prejudices of our Education than from the remoteness of the Theory. For were we not otherwise prepossess'd from the Principles of the vulgar Philosophy, what would be more familiar

familiar and obvious than to conclude that we see and know all things in *God*? This is a Notion which I very early lighted upon, by the *Natural Parturiency* of my own mind, before I had consulted with any Authors that might imbue me with it. But afterwards I met with some that *confirm'd* me in it. For it is a Notion very frequently touch'd upon by *Platonists*; by *Plotinus*, by *Proclus*, by *Marsilius Ficinus*, by *St. Austin*, by the late *French* Philosopher *Du Hamel*, in his Book *De Mente Humana*, and is sometimes glanced at by *Aquinas* himself; but by none that I know of so copiously, so purposely, and so dexterously managed, as by the incomparable Monsieur *Malebranche*, who, I think, has established the truth of it beyond all cavil or exception, as well as reasonable doubting. I shall therefore, for the clearing of this Argument, first give a short and summary account of what that excellent Person has meditated upon it, and then subjoin some further considerations of my own to the same purpose.

VI.

First then, Monsieur *Malebranche* lays down this preparatory Position, that those Objects which are without the Soul, cannot be perceiv'd by themselves, but by the Mediation of *Ideas*. This Proposition is most unquestionable, taking Ideas in a large signification for Images or Representations of things. For things that are perceiv'd must be some way or other Present to the Soul, either by *themselves* or by their *Representatives*. And since they are not by themselves, they must by their Ideas. And so

*De inquir.
rend. verit.
l. 3. part. 2.
c. 1.*

much is acknowledg'd on all sides. Here therefore being no *Controversie*, there needs no more Proof.

VII.

This premised, he thus proceeds. It is therefore necessary that these Ideas which we have of Objects without, should either proceed from those Objects : Or that our Mind has a Power of producing those Ideas. Or that God should produce them with the Mind when he creates it, or that he should produce them as often as we think of any Object. Or that our Mind should possess in it self all the Perfections which it sees in things. Or lastly, that it be united to some Absolutely perfect Being, that includes in himself all the Perfections of Created Beings. By one of these ways we must necessarily perceive whatever we perceive.

VIII.

The first is according to the vulgar Philosophy, which teaches that external Objects send forth certain Species like themselves, and that these Species are carried by the external Senses to the *common Sensory*, and that then they are refined, and spiritualized by the help of that which they call *Intellectus Agens*, and so become *Intelligible*, then are receiv'd into the *Intellectus Passivus*, and then are actually understood. This certainly is either very profound sense, or very profound nonsense, one of the two, and is rather like the *Anatomical* Account how the *Chyle* is turn'd into *Blood*, than like a *Metaphysical* account of the way of understanding. But that this Hypothesis cannot be true, our Author shews from the impossibility of Objects sending forth such Species,

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 125

ties which he proves first from the *Impenetrability* of *Bodies*, Which must needs hinder that these Species which are nothing else but *Corporeal effluvia*, should possess the same *Ubi*, which yet must be, if, by them Objects are render'd visible, because the whole Medium, and every part of it, must be supposed full of them.

IX.

This he proves, Secondly, from the *change* or *variation* of the Species. For 'tis most certain, that the nearer the Object, the greater it shews. But now what should afterwards diminish this Species, and what is become of those parts whereof it consisted, when it appear'd greater? and what is it that so suddenly augments it, when 'tis beheld through a *Telescope*?

X.

The same he proves further from the consideration of a *perfect Cube*, all the Species of whose sides are unequal, and yet the *sides themselves* are equally square. And Lastly, he censures it as an unconceivable supposition, that a Body should continually send forth Species every where, so as to fill every Point of such vast spaces, and yet not be *sensibly* diminish'd. This first Hypothesis therefore cannot be true.

XI.

The second is, that our Mind has a Power of Producing these Ideas. This he also shews to be false from the Absurdity that would thence follow, which is, that Man would then be able to *Create*. The consequence he proves by shewing that these Ideas are *Real Beings*, because they have real Properties, and differ one from another, and represent things really different.

126 Part II. Contemplation II.

And that they are also *Spiritual Beings*, and that then Man would be able to Create more Noble Entities than the *Material World*, which is the workmanship of God.

XII.

Our Author further shews, that our Mind would not *use* this Creative Power, though She had it, from the *Instance* of a *Painter*. For as a Painter, though never so skilful, cannot represent a Creature which he never saw, and whereof he has no Idea; so a Man cannot form the Idea of an Object, unless he first knows it, that is, unless he has an Idea of it, which does not depend upon his own Will. Now if he already has the Idea of that Object, certainly he knows it, and then it is to no purpose for him to form again a *new* Idea of it. This Power therefore of Producing Ideas is given to Man in vain, therefore it ought not to be given, therefore this second Hypothesis is not true.

XIII.

The third is, that God produces these Ideas, either with the Mind, or whenever we think of any Object. That this cannot be true as to the first part, he shews from the *Infinite number* of Ideas which must be supposed in proportion to the Infinite number of things, which he exemplifies in *Mathematical figures*, and the *Combinations* thence arising. 'Tis not in the first place probable that God should create so many things with every Soul: But Secondly, suppose he should, and the Mind were a *Magazine* of all manner of Ideas, yet 'twould be an invincible Difficulty to shew how the Mind among such an Infinite number of Ideas, should be able, and that so readily, to pick out those which

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 127

which it has occasion for. It ought not therefore to be said that Ideas are *Created with us*.

XIV.

And there is as little ground to suppose that God does every moment produce in us as many several Ideas, as we conceive things. For besides that this has already been sufficiently overthrown in the other, 'tis further to be consider'd, that we must then always actually have in us the Ideas of all things, seeing that at all times we can will to think of all things: Which we could not do if we had not already a *confuse* Perception of them, that is, unless an Infinite number of Ideas were continually before our Minds. For we cannot be willing to think of that whereof we have *no* Idea. But we cannot have all this Infinity of Ideas at once in our selves, therefore this third Hypothesis is not true.

XV.

The fourth is that the Mind needs no other thing but *it self* for the Preception of Objects, and that by Contemplating *it self* and her own Perfections, She can perceive all *External* Objects. This is the boldest Assertion of all, and is full of *Impiety* as well as *Absurdity*. They that will maintain this must be obliged to say that the Mind of Man has in it self the Perfections of all things, since it cannot *see* in it self what it *has* not in it self, and then they would do well to consider whether this be not to make a *God* of the *Soul*; For 'tis God only who has in himself the Perfections of all things, and who therefore sees by *his own Light*.

XVI.

Having thus overthrown these four Hypotheses concerning the Mode of our understanding, Our most ingenious Author proceeds to the remaining one, *that we see all things in God.* Which though it be sufficiently establish'd in the overthrow of the rest, yet he goes on to a more immediate and direct proof of it. In order to which he premises two *Postulatum*s. which he had before prov'd, First, that God has in himself the Ideas of all things. This he had before concluded from God's creating all things, which he could not do without having in himself the Ideas of all things. And this I have also demonstrated in my fifth Contemplation, by a distinct Argument taken from the being of *Necessary and Eternal Truths.* The second *Postulatum* is, that God is intimately by his Presence united to our Minds, so that God may be said to be the *Place of Spirits*, as *Space* is the Place of *Bodies.* These two things being supposed, it is most certain that the Mind may see all things in God, if God will be pleased to display these Ideas to her, there being then nothing to hinder it. And that 'tis the Will and Pleasure of God so to do, rather than create an Infinite number of Ideas in every Mind, he thus proves:

XVII.

First, from the *general Oeconomy of the Universe*, wherein 'tis observable that God never does that by *difficult* ways, which may be done by *simple and easie* ways: That is, God never does any thing *in vain*, and without Cause: When therefore God may by himself open and exhibit to us all things barely by willing that we should

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 129

should see those Ideas which are in him, 'tis no way probable that to obtain the *same* end, he should produce such an infinite Multitude of Ideas as are necessary to that variety and multiplicity of Knowledge, that is in all Created Minds.

XVIII.

This Mode of Intelligence our Author further recommends, by considering that by this way Created Minds are placed in the *greatest dependence* upon God that can possibly be. For upon this Hypothesis we cannot only see nothing but what God will let us see, but we can also see nothing but what God *exhibits* to us to be seen. Neither can our Minds be said sufficiently to depend upon God in all its operations, if they are supposed to have all that is necessary for action, that is, to have in themselves the Ideas of all things always present.

XIX.

This again he more strongly inforces by an Argument taken from the *Manner* of our Minds *perceiving* all things. For we all find by certain experience that when we are minded to think of any particular thing, we first cast our Eyes about upon all Beings, and then at last, adhere to the consideration of that Object, which we intended to think upon. Now 'tis past all question that we cannot desire to see any Object, but we must see it already, although *Confusely*, and after a *general* kind of a way. So that since we can desire to see all Objects, now this, now that, hence it will certainly follow, that all Beings are Present to our minds. But now all Beings cannot any other way be present to the mind, but because *God* is present to it, who in the Sim-

130 Part II. Contemplation II.

plicity of his Being comprehends all beings. The same may be further confirm'd from the Perception of *Universals*. Which the mind could not well be supposed able to represent, unless it saw *all* Beings included in *One*. For since every *Created* thing is an *Individual*, no one can say that he perceives any thing *Created*, when he perceives, suppose, a *Triangle* in general. This well deserves to be considered.

XX.

Again, our Ingenious Author argues from the *Idea* which we have of *Infinite*. For 'tis plain that we *perceive* Infinite, though we do not *comprehend* it, and that our mind has a very *Distinct* Idea of God, which it could not have but by its Union *with* God. Since 'tis absurd to suppose that the Idea of God should be from any thing that is *Created*.

XXI.

He further Considers, that the Mind has not only an *Idea* of *Infinite*, but that it also has it *before* it has any Idea of *finite*. For we conceive *Infinite* Being, barely by conceiving *Being*, without considering whether it be *finite* or *infinite*. But now to conceive any *finite* Being, we must *detract* something from that *general* Notion of Being, which by consequence must be *Antecedent*. Our mind therefore perceives nothing but *in* the *Idea* which it has of *Infinite*. And this Idea is so far from being form'd from a *Confuse* heaping together of the Ideas of *Special* Beings, as Philosophers commonly pretend, that all those *Special* Ideas are nothing else but *Participations* from the *general* Idea of *Infinite*. Even as God does not hold his
Being

Being from the Creatures, but all Creatures subsist only by him.

XXII.

He adds one Argument more, which he thinks will go for Demonstration, with those who are used to Abstract ways of Reasoning. It is impossible that God, in any of his actions should have any *Principal End* different from *himself*. This is a Common Notion with every Attentive Thinker. And the Scripture suffers us not to doubt but that God made all things for himself. It is necessary therefore that not only our Natural Love, that is, the motion which he produces in us, should tend towards himself, but that moreover that *Knowledge and Light*, which he bestows upon our mind should open and exhibit to us something that is in *himself*. For whatsoever comes from God cannot be for any other besides God. If God should Create a Mind and give it the Sun, suppose, for its Idea, or immediate Object of Knowledge, God would then make that Mind for the Sun, and not for himself.

XXIII.

God therefore cannot make a mind to know his Works, unless that mind do in some manner see *God* when it sees his Works; so that I may venture to say, that if we did not some way or other *see God*, we should *see nothing* at all. Even as if we did not *love God*; that is, if God did not continually impress upon us the love of good in general, we should *love nothing* at all. For since this love is the same with our Will, we cannot love or will any thing without him, since we cannot love Particular goods but by determining towards those goods that motion of
Love

132 *Part II. Contemplation II.*

Love which God gives us towards himself. We love therefore nothing but by that necessary love by which we are moved towards God, and we see nothing but by that Natural Knowledge which we have of God. And all those *Special Ideas* which we have of the *Creatures*, are nothing else but *Limitations* of the Ideas of the *Creator*, as all the motion of our *Will* towards the *Creatures* are nothing else but *Determinations* of that motion which is toward the *Creator*.

XXIV.

He appeals last of all to *Scripture*, which in divers places gives abundant confirmation to this Hypothesis. As when we are said
 2 Cor. 3. 5. *not to be sufficient of our selves, to*
 Rom. 1. 19. *think any thing as of our selves,*
but that our sufficiency is of God.
 Again, God is said to have *shewn* unto the
Gentiles what might be known of
 Jam. 1. 17. *him.* Again, God is call'd, the
father of lights. God is also said,
 by the *Psalmist*, *to teach man Knowledge.*
 Lastly, He is said, to be the true
 Joh. 1. 9. *light, which inlightens every man*
that comes into the world.

XXV.

From all which, he concludes, that God is the *Intelligible World*, or the *Place of Spirits*, as the *Material World* is the *place of Bodies*. That these *Spirits* receive their *Modifications*, or *Sensations*, from his *Power*, and find their *Idea's* in his *Wisdom*, and by his *Love* are moved by all orderly motions; and that in God we have our *Life*, our *Motion*, and our *Being*. According to that of *St. Paul*. *He is not far from every*

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 133

every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our *Act. 17. 28.* being.

XXVI.

And thus in as short a compass as I could comprize it, have I given a summary account of what the excellent Monsieur *Malebranche* has at large delivered upon this Theory, of our seeing all things in God. I shall now further establish it by some other considerations of my own.

XXVII.

That all our Intellectual Perception is by Ideas, that is, not by the immediate presence of things themselves, but by something that intimately and immediately represents them to our mind, is a thing plain in it self, and by all so acknowledged. And that all the Ideas of things, with their respective habitudes and relations are in God, I have abundantly proved; and also as to the manner explained in my Contemplation of the *Divine Omniscience*. The thing now to be consider'd is, whether we do not see and know whatever we see and know in God; that is, whether those Ideas which are in God, be not the very Ideas which we see, and the immediate Object of our Knowledge and Perception.

XXVIII.

That it is so, besides what Monsieur *Malebranche* has offered upon this Argument, I further prove by considering, first, That since Knowledge is Comprehension of Truth, if the Truth which I Comprehend be in God, and in him only, then I must be said to see and know whatever I see and know in God. This is a plain and easie consequence. And that the Truth

134 Part II. Contemplation II.

Truth which I comprehend is in God only, I thus make out.

XXIX

The nature of Truth consists in a certain mutual respect or habitude of simple Essences one to another. But these relations which I comprehend, and which are the same with *Truth*, are not verified of the simple Essences, as they are in their *External* and *Natural subsistencies*, but as they are in the *Divine Idea's*. I deny not but that there may be relation between things in their *natural subsistencies*, but I say that is not the relation which I *primely* and *directly* behold when I contemplate Truth. For, first, things according to their *Natural subsistencies* are *Temporary*, and once were not; but the relation which I behold is *Eternal*, and was from everlasting; and consequently cannot be the relation of things according to their subsistence in *Nature*. Again, the Essences of things, as to their *Natural* subsistence, may *cease* to be, but the relation which I behold is *Immutable* and *Immortal*, and will be ever the same. Again, things as they are in *Nature*, are not, even while they are, according to that *exactness* according to which we discern some certain relations to belong to them. Thus for instance, when I define a right Line to be that which lies equally between its two Points, is there, can there be any such Line in *Nature* to which this relation may belong? This relation therefore is not the relation of any *Line* in *Nature*, but of a Line in *Idea*. And so 'tis in all other instances; the relations which we behold are not the relations of any *Natural*, but of *Ideal Entities*. These are the things which are *properly*

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 135

perly related, other things are so only by accident and reductively as they come under these. And 'tis the relation of these which we properly discern, and which are the *prime, direct, and immediate* object of our Perception, the relations of other things come under a *secondary discernment*, and they are only so far beheld, as they are beheld in these.

XXX.

And this is what the Schools themselves must of necessity come to, if they would but attend to the consequence of what they affirm, when they say, That *Science is not of Singulars, but of Universal and Abstract Natures*. For where are these Universal Natures? Not in this *Ectypal World*. Whatever is here, is *Singular, this or that*. It must be therefore in the *Ideal or Architypal World*, that is, in the Divine Nature, as exhibitivè of that which is created, where these Universal Natures, which are the proper objects of Science, are to be found. And consequently, 'tis in God that we know all the Truth which we know.

XXXI.

And this very Notion *Aquinas* had once plainly light upon, however he came afterwards to lose it. For, says he in express terms, *It is necessary to say that the human Soul knows all things in their Eternal Reasons, by the participation of which we know all things. For that Intellectual Light which is in us, is nothing else but a participated* Part. 1. Q. 84. Ar. 5. *similitude of that increated Light in which the Eternal Reasons are contain'd.* This is almost as plain an acknowledgment of our seeing all things in God as one would

would wish ; and differs little or nothing from that celebrated Definition *Plato* gives of Knowledge, which he calls, *A Participation of Ideas*.

XXXII.

But to proceed, if the Truth which we see be not in God, I would fain know whence has it its *Unity* and *Identity*, its *Steddiuess* and *Immutability*, its *Everlastingness* and *Perpetuity*? Whence is it that 'tis alike discern'd by *different minds*, and by the *same* mind at *different times*? We have nothing in our *selves* but what is flux and mutable, and the things without us are as mutable and uncertain as we our selves. Again, whence is it that Truth is present in all *places*, and that *independently* upon our *thinking* or *knowing*? For, suppose all the Men and Angels in the World should suspend thinking, yet the existence of Truth would not be thereby suspended, but remain as it was before. For by thinking, we do not *make* Truth, but only perceive it as it is in *it self*, by attending to that Light which shines upon us and is intimately present with us. Truth therefore will exist and be always the same, whether we think or no ; which is a plain Argument that tho' it be *in* us, yet 'tis nothing of *ours*, nor is it at all dependent upon our Understandings, but only upon his who is *necessarily*, and is in *all places*, and is *Truth it self*.

XXXIII.

This conclusion may be further inferr'd from the *Permanency* and *Immutable Stability* of simple Ideas. I find in my mind certain Ideas of a fix'd and unalterable Nature, such as I can neither add any thing to, or at all diminish from.

Thus

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 137

Thus for instance, the Idea of a *Triangle* has a determinate and immutable Nature, such as is not in my Power any way to alter. I can, indeed, cease to think of a *Triangle*, and convert my mind to the speculation of some other Figure. But whensoever I do think of a *Triangle*, I cannot help representing it to my mind after one and the same determinate way. Which is a certain Argument that this Idea is not of my own raising or forming, for then it would be *Arbitrary*, and I might vary it at pleasure; but that 'tis an *absolute Nature*, distinct from, and independent on my Understanding, and, indeed, that 'tis no other than the *Divine Essence* it self, after a special mode of *Exhibition* or *Imitability*: For nothing but God himself is *absolutely Immutable*. He only being that *Father of Lights*, in whom is no varying, nor shadow of turning.

XXXIV.

This, again, may be further argued, from our desire of *Knowledge*, and from the manner of our attaining to it. As to the Desire of Knowledge, I remark this, That among all the things which are *knowable*, there is not one which I may not, nay, which I do not actually desire to know. But now I cannot have any desire of that whereof I have no manner of Knowledge. For desire proceeds from Knowledge, and consequently presupposes it. I must therefore be supposed to have already *some Knowledge* of all that I desire to know; that is, I must have a *confuse Knowledge* of that which I desire to know *clearly and distinctly*. And therefore since I desire to know, or may desire to know every thing *clearly and distinctly*, I must be allowed to have a

confuse Knowledge of every thing. But, now, how can this be, but by my having all things actually present to my mind? And how can this be, but by my having a *confuse* glance of that Being in whom are all things, and who is *All*?

XXXV.

Then as to the *manner* of our attaining to Knowledge, 'tis a thing in the first place worth considering, How a Child comes to learn his first Language. To know a Language, is to know that such a word is to go as a sign for such a thing. Now of words there are some to which the thing that answers is *material* and *sensible*. Others, again, there are, to which the things that answer, are *purely Intellectual*. This premised, I demand how a Child comes to understand the first Language which he learns? You will say, by frequent hearing the word repeated, when at the same time the thing is pointed to, he begins at length to collect that such a word is to go for such a thing; and so to call a Table, a Table, and a Stool, a Stool. True, this serves well enough to explain how we may learn the meaning of such words to which something *sensible* answers. But this won't at all help us out in accounting for the understanding words which signify *pure Intellectual Notions*. For these cannot be *pointed* at when I hear the word, as in the other case, because not *present*, nor *sensible*, and therefore should the word be never so often said over to me, I might indeed grow familiar with the *sound*, but I should never be able thence to understand that this word is to be joyned as a *sign* to such an *Idea*. As for instance, should I hear this word *Vertue* repeated

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 139

repeated to me daily, I should in a little time come to be acquainted with the sound, so as to know it again from any other sound; but sure were I to hear it to Eternity, I should never thence be instructed among all those Intellectual Idea's which I have, which was signify'd by that word, neither of them being to be pointed to when I heard the sound. And yet we find by experience that Children do make a shift to find out this, and that they learn the meaning of such words whose Idea's are *Intellectual*, almost as soon as they do the *other*, and that at an Age when their *observation* is next to none at all. But how they come to do this is an amazing thing to consider. And truly I have no other way to solve the difficulty, but by supposing that as often as they hear such words to which the Notions that answer are *purely Intellectual*, and consequently be not pointed at when the word is spoken: God then, who is never wanting in *necessaries*, supplies the part of the *Teacher*, by exhibiting such a part of the *Ideal World*, to the mind of the Child, as is signified by such an arbitrary sign. And this *exhibition* being thus occasionally vouchsafed by God whenever such words are repeated, has the same effect to make the Child understand the meaning of words, whose Notions are *purely Intellectual*, as *pointing* to the sensible Object has to make him know the meaning of words which signify things *material* and *sensible*.

XXXVI.

Pass we next from knowledge of *words* to knowledge of *things*. This knowledge we get and increase by *Study*. Now Study is nothing else

else, but a close application of mind to the speculation of Truth. The more intent we are in our view of Truth, the more we discover of it. And not only so, but the more intently we speculate it, the more uniform we are in our judgments about it. The more we *think*, the more we come to *agree* in our *thoughts*. Now this plainly argues, that Truth is one absolute and separate Nature, independing upon our Understandings; and, yet withal, intimately and constantly present to them; For, otherwise, how could it be thus in our power at any time to apply our minds to the speculation of it? Now, what can this one independing, and ever-present Nature be, but God? To know *Truth* therefore is to know God: and *Divinity* is a larger *Study* than we are aware of.

XXXVII.

Further, I consider, that since God has made Man after *his own Image and Likeness*, 'tis highly rational to believe that we imitate him in our *Understandings*; Understanding being one of the principal parts of Man. And how can we duely imitate him in our Understandings, unless we be supposed to know and perceive after the same general way that God knows and perceives? But now the mode of the Divine Understanding, is by consulting the *Ideal World*, that is, *himself* as variously imitable and exhibitiv of things. Thus 'tis most certain God knew and perceived before the Production of this *Ectypal World*, there being then no other mode of Perception imaginable. And thus he must be supposed to perceive *now and ever*, there being *no varying or shadow of turning* in God, much less from *better to worse*, as it would be, should God
be

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 141

be supposed *before* the Creation to know by and in himself, and *afterwards* by any created or foreign Ideas. It is therefore congruous to suppose that as God knows and perceives all things in himself, so Man who is after the Divine image knows and perceives all things in God.

XXXVIII.

Again, 'tis highly rational to believe that we Know and Perceive *Now* after the same manner, tho' not in the same degree, as we shall *hereafter* in Heaven. As the Eye sees after the same manner, tho' not in the same measure, by night as it does by day. For the state of Glory is not the *Destruction*, but only the *Perfection* and *Exaltation* of the state of Nature. But now 'tis certain this shall be the mode of our Vision and Perception *hereafter*, we shall then see all things in God, for, says the Psalmist, *With thee is the Well of Life, and in thy light shall we see light.* Psal. 36. And therefore we may with reason conclude that this is the mode of our *Present Intelligence*, and that now also we see *Light*, in the *Light of God*. And accordingly says the Apostle, *now we see thro' a Glass darkly, but then face to face*: Where observe that our *Present Vision* does not differ from our *Future*, as to the *Object*, but only as to the *Degree of Clarity*. God is the *Object* of both, only now he is seen thro' a *Glass*, that is, thro' the *Veil* or our *Mortal Flesh*, whereas then the *Veil* shall be remov'd, and our vision of him shall be *Clear* and *Perfect*.

XXXIX.

Lastly, I consider that I always think of *Being in general*. Particular Beings indeed I think of, or not think of at Pleasure, but Being in general

142 *Part II. Contemplation II.*

neral is ever before my mind, and I cannot possibly remove it from me. For there is the same Proportion in our *Understanding* that is in our *Love*. There is a variety and vicissitude in our love of *Particular* goods, sometimes we love them, sometimes we do not love them, sometimes we love this, sometimes that, sometimes more, and sometimes less; but our love of good in *general* is necessary, constant, and uniform. And there is the same measure in our *Thinking*. *Particular* Beings we think of by intervals and with variety. But we always and unceasingly think of Being in *general*. And when we think of *Particular* Beings, we don't so much depart from *Being in general*, as confine and determine our minds to some *certain* Perfections of it. Nay, when we think that we think of *nothing*, our mind is then most full and pregnant of wandering, Indeterminate, Indefinite Ideas of Being in general. This I evidently experiment in myself, and I question not that whoever attends to the operations of his mind will find the same: Now I demand whence should this come to pass that I am thus necessarily determin'd at all Times, and in all Places to think of Being in general, but only from this, that Being in general is inseparably united to my mind; and intimately present to it, as being *always*, and *every where*.

XL.

But now Being in general is the same with *God*, as has been shewn in the Former part. If therefore Being in general be united to my Soul, then *God* is united to my Soul. And not only so, but also more intimately united to it than any thing else can be, because there is nothing

nothing else that I necessarily think of, whereas I do necessarily think of God. And if God be so intimately united to my Soul, how can I otherwise conclude but that 'tis in him that I see all that I see? For in what else *can* I see it, nothing being so intimately Presential to me as God? And in what else *need* I see it, God having in himself the Ideas of all things, as was before proved.

XLI.

Now as to *Scripture-Authority*, besides what *Monsieur Malebranche* has alledged, I further offer to be consider'd, First, that God is not only said to *enlighten* our minds, and all our *Illumination* is every where ascribed to him, but it is also particularly ascribed to the *second Hypostasis* of the Blessed Trinity, who is $\lambda\omicron\gamma\Theta$, the word or inward conception of God, or the Ideal World. Thus in the 8th of the *Proverbs*, there is described a Substantial Wisdom (which can be no other but the Divine $\lambda\omicron\gamma\Theta$, who is the Wisdom of the Father) concerning which it is said, *The Lord possess'd me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the Beginning (and so St. John, In the Beginning was the word) or ever the earth was: When there were no Depths I was brought forth (there's the eternal Generation) when there were no Fountains abounding with Water. Before the Mountains were settled; before the Hills was I brought forth. While as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the Fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the World. When he prepared the Heavens I was there, when he set a Compass upon the face of the Deep. When he establish'd the*
Clouds

144 Part II. Contemplation II.

Clouds above, when he Strenghtn'd the fountains of the Deep. When he gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment, when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth. Then was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoycing always before him. This I think will readily be acknowledg'd to be a plain and graphical Description of the Divine $\alpha\beta\gamma$, or Ideal World. Now of this same Divine $\alpha\beta\gamma$ it is also said in the same Chapter, Counsel is Mine, and sound Wisdom, I am understanding. By me Kings reign, and Princes Ver. 14. decree Justice. By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth. And again, v. 20. I lead in the way of Righteousness, in the midst of the Paths of Judgment. And again chap. 9. says the same substantial Wisdom, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither, (that is, to the Intellectual Feast which she is there said to have prepared) and to him that wants understanding she says, Come eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled.

XLII.

By this it is as plain as any thing can be that is figuratively expressed, that all our illumination proceeds from the Divine $\alpha\beta\gamma$, the substantial wisdom of God. But St. John speaks more plainly; This is the true light which inlightens every man that comes into the world. Now true Light, is here the same as only Light, and implies that all other pretended Lights, are false ones. Again says our Lord, I am the light of the world. And, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And again says our Lord

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 145

in his Prayer, *Sanctifie them thro' thy truth, thy word is truth*: Which is not meant of the written Word, but of the substantial and eternal Word, as appears from the Context. Lastly, the Apostle says expressly of this Divine Word, that *he is made unto us Wisdom*.

Which is exactly according to our 1 Cor. 30. Hypothesis that we see all things in the Ideal World, or Divine λόγος.

XLIII.

I might add a great deal more to this purpose, but I think that from these considerations, joyn'd with those of Mr. *Malebranche*, 'tis clear, even to Demonstration, that Man is not his own Light, or a Light to himself, and also that no other Creature can be a Light to him, but that he sees and knows all things in the Divine λόγος or Ideal World, which is that *true Light within him* so much talkt of by Enthusiasts, who by a kind of *blind Parturiency* of mind have *confusedly glanc'd* at what we have here more *distinctly explain'd*: That all our Light and Illumination proceeds wholly from him who at first said, *let there be light*; that we see so much of *Truth* as we see of *God*; that the Ideas which are in God are the very Ideas which we see, and that the Divine λόγος is our *Wisdom*, as well as the *Wisdom of his Father*. So absolutely necessary is the *Doctrin of Ideas*, when rightly stated to the explaining the Mode both of *Divine* and *Human Knowledge*; without which I shall venture to affirm that they can neither of them be *explained or understood*.

The Use of this to Devotion.

SINCE then God is that *Intelligible Light*, in which we see and know, and since we see and know so much *Truth* as God is pleased to discover to us of *himself*, we may hence collect to the advantage of Devotion, First, what little Reason the Wifest of us all have to be proud of our *understanding* and *knowledge*. We are generally more apt to be proud of our Understandings than of any thing else about us; but this we have least reason to be proud of, there being according to the preceeding Hypothesis no other difference between a Wise Man and a Fool, but only that God is pleased by his *in-dwelling Ideas* to illuminate one more than another, or to discover more of himself to one than he does to another. And if so, then to be proud of my knowledge, is to be proud that I am more dependent upon God than another Man is, which indeed is a very proper Argument for *Humility*, but a very Absurd one for *Pride*.

Hence again we may collect how reasonable 'tis that we should Bless, Praise and Adore God as the sole Author of all our Light and Knowledge, as our immediate Teacher and Instructor, and that to him we should always address our selves in Prayer for further Illumination.

Lastly, 'twill hence follow that we ought always most chearfully to attend to the Dictates of this Light within us, that we ought to look upon all Truth as Divine Revelation, and on our Reason as a Divine Monitor, as the *Angel of God's*

Of Man, as an Intelligent Creature. 147

God's Presence. And accordingly to be very careful how we transgress any of his clear Dictates, that we grieve not *this Angel* lest he smite us, that we do nothing against him, lest he forsake us.

The Aspiration.

MY God, my Light, what is Man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of Man that thou so regardest him? But much more, what is Man that he should so regard himself? that he should regard himself for that which is least of all his own, his Knowledge and Wisdom? For, O God, we are not a Light to our selves, but 'tis thou, O God, art our Light, and in thy Light do we see Light.

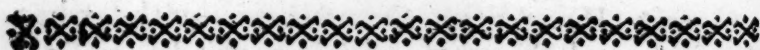
O my Wonderful Counsellour, with what Humility and Poverty of spirit ought I to reflect upon the richest Endowments of my Mind, since I see only by thy Light, and depend upon thee for what I Know, as much as for what I am? And how unworthy should I be of thy Divine Light, should I be puffed up through the Abundance of this thy Revelation?

Not unto me therefore, O my God, my Light, not unto me, but to thy greatness and goodness be the Praise and the Glory. For 'tis thy Word, thy Eternal Word, that is a Lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths. The Lord is my light and my salvation, and it is he that teacheth Man Knowledge. I will therefore thank the Lord for giving me warning, my reins also chasten me in the night-season.

148 Part II. Contemplation III.

Lighten my Darknefs I beseech thee, O Father of Lights, and shine upon me more and more with the *Brightness of thy glory*. O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me and bring me unto thy holy Hill, and to thy dwelling.

Shew the light of thy countenance upon thy servant, and teach me thy Statutes. Psal. 119. O let the Angel of thy Presence go always before me in this my Pilgrimage, and grant that I may alway attend and give heed to his Counsel and Direction, that so walking in thy Light here, I may for ever live, and for ever rejoyce in the full and open Light of thy Countenance hereafter. *Amen.*



CONTEMPLATION III.

Of Man consider'd as an Amorous Creature.

I.

TRuth and Good employ the whole Capacity of Man, who seems to be purely designed and made for the contemplation of the former, and for the desire and fruition of the latter. Having therefore consider'd Man as an *Intelligent Creature*, or as he is a *Contemplator of Truth*, I shall now proceed to consider him as an *Amorous Creature*, or as he is a *desirer of Good*.

II.

The management of this Subject engages me upon the consideration of these four things. *First*, What Love or Desire is, or wherein the general Nature of it does consist? *Secondly*, that Love or Desire is in Man, or that Man is an *Amorous Being*. *Thirdly*, Whence Man has this Affection, or what is the proper cause of it. *Fourthly*, and Lastly, After what manner this Affection has it self, or how it stands proportion'd to that cause.

III.

Now as to the *First*, I say that the general nature of Love consists in a *motion of the Soul towards Good*. But this I have sufficiently explained in a distinct *Vid. Theory* Treatise upon this occasion, to *and Regulation* which I shall chuse rather to refer *tion of Love*. my Reader, than to trouble him or my self with needless repetitions.

IV.

As to the *Second*, That there is such a motion in Man, I need say no more, but that we are intimately conscious of it, as much as we are of the motion of our Heart, or Lungs, or of any other Physical Impression in or about us. All therefore that I shall further insist upon shall be the two last things: *First*, What is the proper cause of this motion in Man. And, *Secondly*, After what peculiar manner this motion has it self, or stands porportioned to that cause. To these two Enquiries I shall confine my present Contemplation.

V.

As to the cause of this motion in Man, which we call Love or Desire, I consider that it must be

150 Part II. Contemplation III.

the same that is the cause of all the Physical Motion in the Universe. Now Physical Motion is resolv'd into a double cause, an *occasional cause*, and an *efficient cause*. The occasional cause of Physical Motion is *Emptiness* or *Vacuity*. For in that which is *absolutely full* there can be no Motion, because of the Impenetrability of Bodies. The efficient Cause of Physical Motion is either particular or universal. The particular is, the pressure or impulse of particular Bodies one against another. The universal is, no other than God himself, who in the Creation of the World (as the *Cartesian* Philosophy rightly supposes) dispensed a certain Portion of Motion and Rest to Matter, which he still preserves the same by his Almighty Power. So that if one part of Matter cease to be moved, so much motion as was in that is transferred to another part: And if the motion of one decreases or be diminished, it is compensated in another. And so the same measure of motion is always conserved in the Universe. And unless God be supposed to be the Author of Motion, 'twill be impossible to give any account of the Original of it. For neither can Bodies move themselves, nor can they be moved by one another on to Infinity. We must therefore at last come to a *first Mover unmoved*, which is God. And so *Aristotle* calls God, τὸ πρῶτον κίνησιν ἀκίνητον, the *first Mover unmoved*.

VI.

And thus in the same Proposition, the motion of Love is also resolvable into a double cause, an *occasional Cause*, and an *efficient Cause*. The occasional Cause of this motion, as of the other, is *Emptiness* or *Vacuity*. For Love or Desire is founded

Of Man, as an Amorous Creature. 151

founded upon *Indigence* and *Self-insufficiency* of the Soul, which having not within it self enough to content it, is forced to go out of it self for supplies. And so *Aristotle* in his *Ethics*, ἀνάνησις καὶ ἐνδεσία ἢ ἐμθυμία, *Desire is the fulfilling of Indigence*. And accordingly we find that the more weak and indigent any Person is, still the more abounding in desire. Thus Children are more profuse in their Desires than Adult Persons, Women than Men, and the Sick more than those who are in Health. This is well shadowed forth in *Jotham's* Parable, wherein the *Bramble* is represented as more *ambitious* than either the *Olive-tree*, *Fig-tree*, or the *Vine*. Judg. 9. 15. For he presently accepted of that Empire which they had all declined. Where there is no Indigence there is no room for Desire; and accordingly God, who is an absolutely full Being, can no more admit of desire, than a place that is absolutely full can admit of motion.

VII.

As to the *efficient Cause* of this Moral Motion, it is also double as in Physical Motion. It is either Particular or Universal. The particular efficient Cause, are particular Goods, whether Sensual or Intellectual; which act upon the Soul, and answer to the pressure or impulse of particular Bodies in Natural Motion. The Universal efficient Cause, is the Universal Good, or God, whom we suppose to have imprinted a certain stock of Motion upon the Intellectual World, as he did upon the Natural, Which he also conserves and maintains by his Omnipotence, as he does the other.

VIII.

For, I consider, that there is the same Necessity of a *first Mover* in Moral, as there is in Natural Motions: And upon the very same grounds. But now 'tis impossible that there should be any other *first Mover* besides God. And therefore whatever intermediate Causes there may be of this motion, it must at last be resolved into an impression of God upon our Souls, whom therefore I call the *Universal efficient cause of Love*.

IX.

And so much for the Cause of this Motion in Man. I come now to consider the last Enquiry, namely, after what peculiar manner this motion has it self, or how it stands proportioned to its cause. I do not mean its *occasional* cause, that being not so proper a *cause* as a condition, but its *efficient* cause. Now this being double, Particular and Universal Good; the question in more explicate terms will be, after what peculiar manner our Love stands affected or proportioned to Particular and Universal Good.

X.

Now in answer to this, I consider, first, That since God is the *first Mover* in the motion of Love, he must necessarily determine this motion toward himself, or make himself the term of this motion, and the only term too; it being impossible that God should act for any end different from himself. Whence it follows, that Universal good, or good in general, is the only good to which we are *directly* and *properly* moved by God.

XI.

Hence again it follows, that good in common, or God, must be the Primary and Adequate Term or Object of Love. This being the only good to which we are directly moved by God, I say *directly*, for God moves us to particular goods only by moving us to good in general, which is not to move us to them *directly*, but by *accident* and *indirectly*. God cannot move us *directly* to any thing but himself, that is, to universal good, or good in general, which therefore must be the Primary and Adequate Term or Object of Love.

XII.

And this we *sensibly experiment* as well as *rationally conclude*. For 'tis plain that we are conscious to our selves of our loving good as good, or good according to its common Nature, before we love this or that good in particular. And we are further conscious, that when we do love any particular good, 'tis only for the sake of the Universal good. We love it only because we find in it something of the common Nature of good, and the more we find of that, the more we love it. So that 'tis by that love whereby we love good in common, that we love any particular good. And were it not for this Universal good we should be able to love nothing. Which by the way is a plain argument of the *real existence* of such *Universal good*, and consequently that *there is a God*.

XIII.

For, indeed, to speak out in short what I would have, as we understand all things in God, so 'tis in God we love whatever we love. And as when we *understand*, the Divine Ideas are

154 Part II. Contemplation III.

that which we directly and properly perceive, and Created Beings are only so far perceiv'd as they are of a similar nature with those Ideas, and so virtually contain'd in them. So when we Love, universal good, good in common, or God, is that which we directly and properly love, and Created goods, or particular goods are only so far loved as they resemble and participate of the nature of that universal good, to which the motion of our love is Directly and Primarily determined. So that *Particular goods* are as much loved in the *universal good*, as *Particular Beings* are seen and perceiv'd in the *universal Being*.

XIV.

I further consider, that as we are determin'd to good in general *Primarily* and *Directly*, so also the motion whereby we are by God determin'd to it is *necessary, invincible and irresistible*. There is nothing in nature more necessary, no nor so necessary and invincible as that motion whereby we are carried forth to good in general. Here the Soul must not pretend to the least shadow of Liberty, having no more command over this motion, than she has over the motion of the Sun. 'Tis not easie to conceive how *God himself* should fix this motion, but 'tis plain that *Man* cannot any way command it.

XV.

But there is not the same necessity of Determination in our motion towards *Particular* good. I say not the same. M. Malebranch will allow *none*, but 'tis plain that *some* there is. For since we are invincibly determin'd to the Love of good in general, we must needs love good as such, and consequently in every degree

of participation, the general Reason of good being in some measure or other found in every degree of Particular good. Loving therefore good as good we are necessarily determin'd to love every degree of good, and consequently every particular good, with a *Natural Love*, so far as we consider it as good.

XVI.

But because this Particular good is not the Greatest good, and consequently in some junctures may come into competition with a greater, hence it comes to pass that we may upon the whole have more reason to nill and refuse it, than to will and embrace it, and so are not determin'd necessarily to an *Absolute*, effectual, and thorough love of it, tho' yet we must love it as good with a *natural* love as before.

XVII.

For 'tis impossible that we should ever *nill Good*, as we *nill Evil*, any more than we can *will Evil* as we *will Good*. But as our willing of Evil is always with a mixture of *nilling*, tho' willing may in some junctures *prevail*, so our nilling of good is always with a mixture of *willing*, tho' in some junctures nilling may *prevail*: We cannot hate good with a *Pure Hatred*, tho' it be only a *lesser* good, any more than we can love evil with a *Pure Love*, tho' a *lesser* evil.

XVIII.

Whenever therefore by the Competition of goods we are engaged to nill any particular good, we do also will it at the same time. But in different respects. We will it as good, and we nill it as a lesser good; we will it *secundum quid*, according to a certain respect, and we

nill

156 Part II. Contemplation III.

nill it Simply and Absolutely : That is, in other words, tho' we have *some reason* to will it, namely its proper good, in which respect we *necessarily* will it, and consequently *always*, yet we have *more* reason to nill it in the present juncture, as standing in competition with a greater good, and the stronger motive takes place as to *Absolute* and *Effectual* love or choice.

XIX.

This I cannot better illustrate than by the example of *Weights* in a *Ballance*. For tho' that Scale which has most weight in it, weighs *down*, yet it must needs be allow'd that the other Scale does also weigh and press *downward*, tho' not effectually, because otherwise as much weight would be required to make it weigh effectually down as if it were quite empty. And thus 'tis in the present case. Tho' for the Prevalency of Reasons in some junctures the Scale may weigh down for the nilling of good, yet the other Scale also presses, tho' not effectually. And this is what the Schools term a *Velleity*, or Natural Inclination. And 'tis with this Velleity, or Natural Inclination that we are necessarily determin'd to love even Particular good ; but we are not necessarily determin'd to love it absolutely and effectually, because there is no particular good, but what may come in Competition with a greater, and then there will be *more* Reason to *nill* it than to *will* it, and the heaviest Scale will weigh down.

XX.

And thus have I shewn after what peculiar manner our Love stands affected or proportion'd to Particular and Universal good. The difference consists in these two things. *Universal*
good

Of Man, as an Amorous Creature. 157

good is the *Primary* and *Direct* Object of our Love, but our Love tends towards *Particular* good only *secundarily* and *indirectly*, for the sake of what it has of the Universal. Then again there is a difference as to the *Necessity* of the Determination, as well as to the *Primariness* of it. There is indeed *Necessity* on both sides, but not in *like manner*. We are necessarily determin'd to Love universal good *Absolutely* and *Thoroughly*. The Scale does not only weigh here, but *weighs down*. But we are not determin'd to love any Particular good *Absolutely* and *Thoroughly*, but only to love it with a *Natural Inclination* or *Velleity*. And to such a love of it we are as necessarily determin'd, as we are to the love of universal good; but the *Actual Choice* of it is not necessary, there being no Particular good to the *Absolute* and *effectual* love of which we are invincibly determin'd.

The Use of this to Devotion.

THE *Amorousness* of Human Nature, as we have here consider'd it, contains in it many and great incitements to Devotion. For first, since the Occasional Cause of our Love is Indigence and Emptiness, we have great reason to be humble and lowly in Spirit, especially considering that we are continually admonish'd of this our Indigence, as often as we are Conscious to our selves that we love.

Again, since God is the Principal Efficient Cause of Love, and the first Mover in all Moral as well as Natural Motion, it is highly reasonable that he should be principally loved by us from whom we receive our Love, and that we should

158 Part II. Contemplation III.

should be mighty careful how we pervert this *Divine Impression* to any undue object.

Again, since God moves us *Directly* and *Primarily* only to *himself*, and since universal good is therefore the *Primary* and *Direct* Object of our Love, hence it will follow that we ought always to make God the *Primary* and *Direct* Object of our Love, and that we ought to Love nothing for *it self*, but only *in* and *for* God.

And lastly, since we are necessarily determin'd to love good in general, *Absolutely* and *Effectually*, by such a motion as we can neither *resist*, nor any way *Command* or *Moderate*; hence it appears how highly necessary it is that we should *explicitly* fix all that Love upon God, as having all that good in him to which we aspire with a *Blind Confuse* and *Indefinite*, tho' *Necessary* Appetite.

The Aspiration.

MY God, *My Love*, how absurd a thing is it that an *Amorous* Creature should be a *Proud* Creature! My Love is occasion'd by my Indigence, and I cannot Love, but I am minded of that Indigence; how ill then would Pride become me, having so much reason to be humble, and that reason so continually set before me!

Divine Fountain of Love, 'tis from thee I receive all my Love, and upon whom should I place it but upon thee? The fire that descends from Heaven, where should it be spent but upon the Altar? Thou hast a *Right*, O my God, to all my Love, for I cannot love thee with any Love but what is *thy own*. O then do thou
Regulate

Of Man, as an Amorous Creature. 159

Regulate this thy own *Divine Impression*, and grant I may never sin against thee, by the abuse of that Love which thou hast given me. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth*, for doing so much towards the guidance and Regulation of my Love, as to carry me directly only to Universal good, thereby teaching me that I ought to make thee the only *Direct* and *Primary* Object of my Love. My God, I will love as thou teachest me, the First and Direct Motion of Love shall be towards thee, and whatever I love besides thee, I will love only in and for thee.

I thank thee also, My God, for that thou hast made it so necessary for me to love universal good. Thou, O God, art this universal good, and I ought to love thee with the very same Love wherewith I love *Happiness* it self. O that I were as necessarily inclined to love thee, as I am to love Happiness! I do not desire to be trusted with any *Liberty* in the Love of thee. But this, my God, I cannot hope for, till I shall see thee as thou art. O let me therefore love thee to the utmost Capacity of a *Free Creature*. Thou, O God, hast set no Bounds to my love of thee, O let not me set any. My God, I do not; I love thee with all my Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength. *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*





CONTEMPLATION IV.

Man consider'd as an Irregular Lover.

I.

Hitherto we have considered Man as God made him. He was made by God, a *Creature*, an *Intelligent Creature*, and an *Amorous Creature*. The two first of which import the Perfection of God *actually participated* by him, in as much as in him he not only lives, moves and has his Being, but in him has all his *Understanding* also. The last imports in him a *tendency* to the *Divine Perfection*: which is also an *actual Perfection* of his *own Nature*, and such as God also has therein implanted. And thus far is Man wholly the *Divine Workmanship*, and carries in him the *Image* of him that made him. Let us now consider him as he has made himself, and is as it were his *own Creature*.

II.

Now thus to consider Man, is to consider him as an *Irregular Lover*. And to do this fully, and to the purpose intended, Three things will be requisite. *First*, To shew what it is to be an *Irregular Lover*. *Secondly*, How prone and apt Man is to *Love Irregularly*. *Thirdly*, That Man himself is the Author of this proneness of his to *Irregular Love*.

III. In

III.

In relation to the first, if it be demanded, What it is to be an *Irregular Lover*? I answer in one word, That 'tis to be a *Fool*. *Sin* and *Folly*, *Sinner* and *Fool*, are words in Scripture of a like Signification, and are indifferently used one for the other. And we are taught in the *Schools of Morality*, that every *Sinner* is ignorant. Πᾶς ὁ μοχθῶν ἀνοήτῃ, says the *Socratical Proverb*. Indeed, *Sin* has its *Birth* in *Folly*, and every step of its *progress* is *Folly*, and its *conclusion* is in *Folly*. But this will appear more distinctly from the consideration of these two things. *First*, Of the absurdity and madness of the choice which every *Irregular Lover* makes. And, *Secondly*, The error and mistake that must necessarily precede in his Judgment, before he does or can make it.

IV.

As for the absurdity of his choice, 'tis the greatest that can be imagined. For what is it that he chuses? 'Tis to do that which he must and certainly will *repent* of, and wish he had never done, either in *this* World, for its *illness* and *sinfulness*; or, in the *next*, for its *sad effects* and *consequences*. 'Tis to despise the *Authority*, *Power*, *Justice* and *Goodness* of God: 'Tis to transgress his *Commands*, which are good and equitable, and in keeping of which there is *present*, as well as *future* reward. 'Tis to act against the *Frame* of his *Rational Nature*, and the *Divine Law* of his *Mind*: 'Tis to disturb the *Order* and *Harmony* of the *Creation*, and by *Extra-lineal* motions to violate the *Sacred Interest* of *Society*. 'Tis *lastly*, to incur the *Anger* of an *Omnipotent* and *Just God*, and to hazard

162 Part II. Contemplation IV.

hazard falling from his Supreme Good and the last end of his Being, and the being ruined in his *best* Interest to all Eternity.

V.
All this the *Irregular Lover* partly actually incurs, and partly puts to the hazard in every wrong motion of his Love. And for what is all this? Is it for any considerable interest, for any thing that bears something of proportion, and may pretend to competition and a rival Weight in the opposite Scale of the *Ballance*? No, 'tis only for a shadow, for a trifle, for the gratification of some baser appetite, for the acquirement of some little interest, which has nothing to divert us from adhering to that which is truly our best, but only that poor advantage of being *present*, tho' at the same time its *vanity* be present with it.

VI.
And now is this a choice for a *wise Man*, for a Man of *common Sense*? Nay, is it a choice for a Man in his *right Wits* to make? Were a Man to beg an Estate, would one need a better demonstration of a Man's being a Fool, than such a *procedure* as this? If therefore *absurdity of choice* be any argument of folly, the *Irregular Lover* is certainly a very great Fool.

VII.
But this folly will further appear if we consider, *Secondly*, the error and mistake that must necessarily precede in his Judgment before he does or can make such a choice. All irregularity of Love is founded upon ignorance and mistake. For as 'tis impossible to chuse evil as evil in general, so is it no less impossible to chuse or will any *particular kind* of evil, as evil; and consequently, 'tis impossible to will the
evil

Man consider'd as an Irregular Lover. 163

evil of *sin* as such, (the Devil himself can't love *sin* as *sin*.) If therefore it be chosen, it must be chosen under the appearance of good, and it can have this appearance no otherwise than as considered as a *lesser evil*, (for that's the only way whereby an evil may appear good or eligible.) And so it must be consider'd before it be chosen. VIII.

He therefore that chuses *sin*, considers it at the instant of commission, as a lesser evil. And therein consists his error and mistake. He is either *habitually* or *actually* ignorant. He either has not the habitual knowledge of all those things which should preserve him in his duty, or at least he has not the actual consideration of them. For 'tis that which must bring him to *repentance*. And 'tis impossible a Man should *sin* with the very same *Thoughts*, *Convictions* and *Considerations* about him, as he has when he *repents*. This I say is no more possible than for a Ballance to move two contrary ways with the same *Weight*, and in the same *Pasture*. He therefore that *sins*, wants that consideration at least to keep him in his *duty*, which when he *repents*, brings him to it. And is therefore ignorant and mistaken.

IX.

The sum of this matter is, whoever thinks *sin* a lesser evil, is mistaken in his judgment. But whoever commits *sin*, does then think it a lesser evil: Therefore whoever commits *sin* is mistaken in his judgment; so great is the folly of *Irregular Love*, both in reference to the absurdity of the choice, and to the error and mistake of the chuser. And so great reason has every *Irregular Lover* to take up that confession of

164 Part II. Contemplation IV.

of the *Psalmist*, *So foolish was I, and ignorant:*
And even as a beast before thee, Psal. 73.

X.

Having thus considered what it is to be an *Irregular Lover*, let us now in the second place consider how prone and apt Man is to be guilty of *Irregular Love*. 'Tis the grand disadvantage of our Mortal condition, to have our Soul comforted with a *disproportionate* and *uncompliant Vehicle*, and to have her aspiring Wings pinn'd down to the ground. We have a mixt constitution, made up of two vastly different substances, with Appetites and Inclinations to different Objects, serving to contrary Interests, and steering to opposite Points. A compound of Flesh and spirit, a thing between an *Angel* and a *Beast*. We lug about with us a *body* of sin; and the Earthly Tabernacle weighs down the mind. We are at perpetual War and Defiance with our selves, divided like the *Planetary Orbs*, between contrary motions and imperfect tendencies, and like a *factionous State*, distracted and disturbed with a swarm of jarring and rebellious Passions. The Spirit indeed is willing, but then the Flesh is weak. We have, 'tis true, a Law in our *Minds*, but then we have also another in our *Members*, which *war*s always, and *most times* prevails against that of our *Mind*, and brings us into captivity to the Law of sin; so that as the Apostle says, we cannot do the things which we would.

XI.

But, notwithstanding this strong *invigoration* of the *Animal Life*, pushing us still on to the enjoyment of sensible good, were our Intellectual part always *awake*, and equally *attentive* to that

Man consider'd as an Irregular Lover. 165

that *Divine Light*, which shines within her, Man would always love *regularly*, tho' with the reluctancy of an imperfect motion to the contrary. But 'tis far otherwise. We do not always equally attend to the *Divine Illumination*, but the light of our Understandings is often under an *Eclipse*, and so does not shine upon our Wills with an equal and uniform brightness. Hence it comes to pass that our judgments and apprehensions of things are various and changeable. And from this variety and changeableness of our *Judgments*, proceeds great variety and changeableness in our *Wills*.

XII.

Now this being the condition of Man, he must needs be very prone and liable to *Irregular Love*. For being always strongly inclined to sensible good, and not having the *Eye* of his *attention* equally open and awake, he will be often apt to be *actually ignorant* of what he *habitually knows*, and (especially in the heat of a temptation) to judge sensible good a greater good than that which is Moral and Divine, and consequently the want of sensible good to be a greater evil than sin, and so rather than want the enjoyment of sensible good he will consent to the commission of sin, which through want of due *attention* he then erroneously thinks the lesser evil of the two.

XIII.

Thus apt and obnoxious is Man to *Irregular Love*. But that which most of all aggravates the badness of his condition, is that 'tis all owing to himself, and that he himself is the sole Author of this his proneness to *Irregular Love*. 'Tis a point Universally receiv'd, That the present

166 Part II. Contemplation IV.

present state of Man is not that state wherein God first made him, but a state of *degeneracy* and *depravation*. And indeed, 'tis no way congruous to suppose that God could with the Honour of his Attributes send such a piece of Work immediately out of his Hands, as Man is now. And if God could not make Man at first in such a state as he is now in, then neither could he subject him to it without sin. For, if he could subject him to it without sin, then he might as well have made him so at *first*; but, 'tis supposed that he could not make him so at *first*, and therefore neither could he subject him to this condition without sin. And if not without sin, then not without sin *really* and *truly* committed by him. For, to subject him to this condition for the sake of sin *arbitrarily* imputed only, is the same as to do it without any sin at all. 'Tis necessary therefore to pre-suppose some real sin or other in Man as the cause of this his *depravation* and great proneness to *Irregular Love*.

XIV.

But, now, whether every Man sinned in his own Person for himself, and so was his own *Adam*, according to the *Hypothesis* of the *Pre-existentiaries*; or, whether one common Person sinned for all the rest, as 'tis more vulgarly held, I shall not here take upon me to *determine*. 'Tis sufficient to say, in general, that 'tis necessary to presuppose some Sin or other in man, truly and properly Speaking, as the Cause of this his Depraved and Miserable Condition. And they that can Intelligibly make out *Original Sin*, as 'tis usually term'd, to be such, may make use of that *Hypothesis*. But, if that be not intelligible,

Man consider'd as an Irregular Lover. 167

gible, then we must of necessity come to *Pre-existence*. However it be, this only I contend for at present, that some sin or other must be supposed in Man antecedent to this his condition, and that 'tis through his own fault that he is so prone to *Irregular Love*.

The Use of this to Devotion.

THIS whole Contemplation serves very much to the greatest *Humiliation* and *Mortification* of Man, both before God, and all his Fellow-Creatures. For, if *Irregular Love* be so monstrous a deformity, and so great a folly, and if Man be so very prone to *Irregular Love*, and is also himself the Author of that proneness, what stronger *Combination* of Argument can there be imagined, for *Humility* and *Lowliness* of Spirit? For this is the worst that can be said of any thing, and is the *Sum* and *Abstract* of all that's base and vile.

It may also, Secondly, be argued from the great evil of *Irregular Love*, and from our great proneness to be guilty of it, that it highly concerns us to have constant recourse to God in Prayer, for his Divine aid and assistance, against falling into that which is so great a *Folly*, and so great a *Mischief*, and which by an *Infirmity* of our own contracting we are so very *apt* to fall into.

The Aspiration.

TO thee, O my God, belongs *Praise* and *Adoration*, for endowing me with those excellent Powers of *Understanding* and *Love*; but to
me

168 Part II. Contemplation IV.

me Shame and Confusion of face, for *misapplying* the one, and *not attending* to the Dictates of the other.

I blush, O my God, and am ashamed to think that my nature should stand so much inclined to irregular Love, a thing so full of Mischief and Folly, but much more that I my self should bring my self into such a state of impotence and depravation. My heart sheweth me the great Foulness and abominableness of Sin, and yet I find my self over-prone to commit it. *So Foolish am I and Ignorant, and even as a Beast before thee.*

But I desire, O my God, to be yet more vile. I am not vile enough in my own eyes, tho' too much so in thine. Nor can I ever be vile enough in my *Opinion*, for being so vile in my *Nature*. Strike me then I beseech thee with a deep, and with a lively sense of my own Wretchedness, and make me as *Humble* as I am *Wicked*.

23. OC 62

And since, thro' the Infirmary of my flesh, I am so apt to err in the conduct and application of my Love, O hold thou up my goings in thy Paths, that my Footsteps slip not. Make me always to attend to that *Divine Light* of thine within my Breast, and let the victorious sweetness of thy Grace outcharm all the relishes of sensible good. But above all, Keep thy Servant from *Presumptuous sins*, lest they get the Dominion over me. And let all these words of my mouth, and this whole meditation of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen.

g
e

o
h
f
y
f
h
f
t-
m

e
s,
e
y
h
n
m

I
on
py
ys
in
of
le
m
on
h,
ys
nd